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# THE SOUTHERN BANTU

By  
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and  
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## NOTE

**M**R. STANDING is mainly responsible for Chapters I–V and XII, Mr. Marquard for Chapters VI–XI and XIII. Readers will find repetition here and there, which is necessary in order that each subject may be treated as a unit.

The tables of figures in Chapter XII are taken from Annual Reports and from the bulletins of the Southern Rhodesia Statistical Department.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

**T**HERE are many reasons for the lack of sympathy—to give it a mild name—which Europeans and Bantu in South Africa on the whole feel for each other. They are partly economic, though there are other reasons which are almost equally strong.<sup>1</sup> We do not intend to discuss them here, except by mentioning some which could certainly be removed, since they arise from nothing more important than mere ignorance of another race's manners and beliefs. Similar small differences of custom are sufficient to make races of common European blood dislike each other intensely and unreasonably, and it is not surprising that they should often cause friction between Europeans and Bantu.

Few Europeans understand a Bantu language well enough to give even simple directions about jobs of work or to make simple inquiries. Fewer still can or will speak it well enough to discuss more complicated subjects. Certainly very few living in towns do so. During recent years many more Bantu have learnt to speak English than ever before, so that the linguistic gulf is being narrowed. But there is still great difficulty in communication, and the results are self-evident.

Bantu arriving in a European town straight from a reserve or protectorate make a bewildering entry into a world full of new ideas. The shock is somewhat less for men or youths who have been to mission schools. Traffic, big buildings, electricity, the constant use of money, and the general hostility of every one he meets are some of the

<sup>1</sup> For which see P. Nielsen, *The Colour Bar* (Juta).

more obvious facts which strike the new-comer. The exalted position and privileges of European women are new and strange to him, as they would be to most men of non-European races. Apart altogether from his having to work amongst surroundings and with implements quite unfamiliar to him, he finds that his tribal conventions are reversed. At home he sits down before the chief as a sign of respect; amongst Europeans he is expected to stand up. Hitherto he has been accustomed to hold out both hands, hollowed like a cup, to receive a gift, to show that he regards it as large in quantity. Europeans tend to regard this as a sign of greed. In the Bantu mind there is no disgrace in asking for gifts, and much disgrace in refusing them; this is definitely not a European belief. Europeans on the whole consider forgetfulness to be some mitigation of neglect of duty, whereas in some Bantu languages 'to forget' is the same as 'to do wrong', and in common politeness a man is bound to make excuses or tell a lie or two rather than admit that he forgot to do something. His ideas about how to make food edible differ from those current amongst Europeans, as do his conceptions of melody, cleanliness, and punctuality, though he can learn to keep up to European standards in these matters. Europeans generally like a man to look them in the face, and they think, probably wrongly, that any one who looks them in the eyes is honest. Bantu consider it merely impudent on their part to do so, and imagine that a downcast or averted look is fitting when they are addressing a superior. Europeans would also consider that any one arriving at a house or farm ought to report to the head of the household. Bantu custom requires any one arriving at a kraal to sit down and wait till some one sees him and the head of the kraal sends for him. These are simple instances of differences which in

themselves are utterly unimportant, but which contribute towards the mass of misunderstanding and bad feeling that exists. It must be remembered that much of the home training of the Bantu originally consisted of careful drilling in various formal habits such as those mentioned, and they were deeply embedded in tradition.

Bantu and Europeans differ in at least three other important respects.

One is their attitude towards animals. Europeans, or at least those belonging to the races which are chiefly represented in South Africa, are fond of horses, cats, dogs, and pets of all breeds, and some of them carry their fondness to an absurd degree. The Bantu, on the other hand, resemble some of the South European races in being very fond of children, but callous about animals. Even the Bantu man's passion for his adored cattle never took the form of devotion which the European often lavishes on his household pets, and it is only in recent years that any Bantu have come to feel much regard for horses. To a European who likes dogs or any other sort of animal, this lack of affection seems brutal and unnatural, but we have to remember that people living hard lives in close contact with Nature have not usually developed our luxurious emotions.

A second respect is their estimate of the value of time. Europeans, especially those from the North-West of Europe, attach value to work for its own sake and feel a sense of guilt and shame if they do not fill their days with purposeful effort and keep up a perpetual contest with the clock. No doubt this obsession is less dominant in South Africa than it is, say, in Manchester or Chicago, but even here it contrasts emphatically with the Bantu view. Work, except hunting and cattle-tending, was to

the Bantu a necessary evil, and the tyranny of time amounted to little more than the passing of seasons and the slow lapse of generations. Contact with Europeans has forced the Bantu to adopt a new and not very palatable conception of these things. Lest we should feel too proud of our difference in this respect, we ought to remember that the English are perhaps the laziest race in Northern Europe and seem to owe some of their success to their dislike of aimless drudgery.

Finally, the ideal of truth has a different value to the two races. This is not to say that primitive Bantu habitually lied or broke promises. Probably the average performance amongst them was not much inferior to that of Europeans if all types were fairly compared. But whereas all Europeans admit truth to be a virtue and feel a sense of discomfort if detected in disguising it, the Bantu had no ideal of truth-telling for the truth's own sake. It seemed to them that virtues such as politeness and urgent needs such as self-preservation were of more merit than laborious adherence to fact. Such differences have been noted in a lesser degree even in a small area like the British Isles, amongst sections of the inhabitants who differ in descent and customs: whereas those of one area take a fierce delight in telling people unpleasant truths, others 'tell you what they think you'd like to hear and is easiest for them to say'.

Without venturing on the question of whether and, if so, how all the causes of fear and dislike between the two races can be removed, we may at least say that whatever good the Bantu possess will appear much more quickly if Europeans look for it than if they assume that it does not exist. The Bantu are still keen judges of character, and respond very much according to their estimate

of the man they are dealing with. And they are, on the whole, very anxious for approval, and even more than Europeans they repay encouragement of the right kind.

## CHAPTER II

### ORIGIN OF THE BANTU

**A**FRICA is believed by some to have been the cradle of the whole human race, and others hold that the Nile Valley was the birthplace of modern civilization. But the greater part of the African continent remained till recently almost untouched by the influences which in other continents led to trade, seafaring, the use of machinery, the growth of great cities, and the civilizations of India, China, and Europe. So far as Africa to-day possesses any material civilization, it is, except to some extent in North Africa, entirely due to the introduction during the last 500 years of European goods, machines, ideas, and people.

The slowness of the rate at which Africans have developed does not prove much about their probable future. Any race developing in African conditions might have developed similarly, even a race with the latent capacity to develop as European races have done in their very different surroundings and climate. Whether or not Africans can absorb or adapt much of the way of living which has grown up during the past 3,000 years in Europe can only be proved by experience. There is little foundation for the idea that the negro race is obviously more primitive than the Nordic. So far as features, limbs, and skin go, there are only two points—his prominent mouth and his brown or black complexion—which suggest that the negro is nearer the primitive forms of human life. Possibly anatomists may discover some fundamental difference between the negro brain and the European, proving that that of the negro is inferior, but there is no satisfactory evidence about this yet.

The north coast of Africa has always been in touch with whatever civilization existed in Europe, but the Sahara Desert shut the rest of the continent off from these influences. The long southwards extension of Africa, with a wide and lonely ocean on each side and few good harbours on its dangerous coasts, isolated it during the period when Europeans were advancing from a state originally very similar to that of native Africans to one of much greater wealth, knowledge, and military strength. The parts of Africa nearest to the sea were usually the least inviting to early travellers. Much of the coast was rocky and stormy, while most of the remainder revealed only unhealthy marshes and jungle. Southern Africa became known to the Portuguese in the fifteenth century through the accident of its lying in the way of their route to India. They would have been greatly pleased if the whole of it south of the tropics had sunk into the sea. For 400 years European influences trickled round the shores of the continent without affecting the interior at all except indirectly through the slave trade and slave wars.

Throughout the continent the natural conditions usually include a high degree of heat, a rainfall which is often small and concentrated into a comparatively short season, and an abundance of really virulent animal and vegetable pests, the animal or insect pests including ticks, tsetse flies, jiggers, white ants, fleas, and locusts. Much of the continent is uninhabitable, but the remainder will support life up to a certain standard with less labour than is needed in most parts of Europe. So, unlike Europeans, the Bantu were never driven by hard winters to improve their means of shelter and subsistence. Africa has a fairly large number of big natural barriers, such as deserts, mountain ranges and tangled river valleys, and it is very

badly provided with waterways. Few of its rivers are navigable for more than short distances and there are very few inlets of the sea. Natural waterways played a great part in the development of civilization in China, Europe, and America, but in Africa they have been little used for transport, save on the upper Zambesi, the Niger, and parts of the Congo.

There were also social reasons for the slow development of the Africans before and even after Europeans came. Just because they had so few points of contact with outsiders, they tended all the more to preserve a specially rigid kind of conservatism in their customs and beliefs, nearly all of which seem to aim at keeping everything as it always has been, and exterminating any one who wants to change it in the slightest degree. Most primitive peoples are rather like this, but in other continents, especially Europe, where travel by water was always easy, frequent meetings with other tribes did something to break down the rigidity of early tribal custom. During the last 400 years the Bantu have met plenty of members of more advanced races and have made little attempt to copy them except when guided by missionaries or other teachers, for the gap was too big to be jumped unless the more advanced race really wanted to assist the other to cross it.

A fact of some importance is that Africans did not know the arts of reading and writing until Europeans brought them. Obviously the preservation and spread of knowledge depend to an enormous extent on reading and writing. And had they possessed these arts they would at least have preserved their laws and customs in a more intelligent way, with some understanding of their object and not merely a blind attachment to tradition long after its meaning had been forgotten.



Moreover, for many centuries their life was one of migration, and of bickering with Bushmen. It cannot have been at all favourable to the development of any kind of culture. Perhaps intermarriage with women of Bushman tribes was a further reason why some tribes made no advance. The inhabitants of any area seldom met strangers; there was little need for trade; distances were very great in proportion to the number of people existing, and it was very difficult to convey goods over land. Diseases, such as hookworm, malaria, dysentery, enteric, sleeping sickness, typhoid, bilharzia, and poisons originating in snakes and insects, kept away or killed off travellers from outside, besides lowering the energy and shortening the lives of the native inhabitants. Existence in Africa on a low standard has always been fairly easy for men of any colour, because of the ease with which crops can be grown, the small need of shelter against bad weather, and the abundance of game, but it has always been hard to rise much above that low standard. Some, if not all, of the beliefs of the Bantu seem to have begun in attempts to lay down strict rules of life which would help the tribe or family to survive in hard conditions. The result of all these factors has been a very slow growth of organized energy and material achievement.

The oldest native races of Africa are known rather vaguely as Bushmen. At one time they may have been found all over Africa up to the Sahara—in fact, the whole human race probably evolved from similar ancestors—but they were gradually driven down to the Kalahari and the extreme south of the continent. They were fundamentally different both in physique and intellect from Europeans and from the other native inhabitants, and have been almost completely extirpated by them. There was also a race of Hottentots, partly of Bushman origin, but more

numerous, more like Europeans, and better able to protect themselves. They have now for the most part been absorbed into the Cape coloured class. Finally, there are the numerous tribes, now containing nearly a hundred million inhabitants, who belong to the negro and Bantu races.

The negro race was one of the earliest branches of the human stock. It seems to have originated in the Congo Basin and then spread north and east. The Bantu race is much younger. It originated about 2,000 years ago in the country north of the great equatorial lakes, when some group or groups of lighter-coloured adventurers from the north or north-east (the Nile Valley or Abyssinia) mixed with the negroes of that country and provided some sort of common origin for all the tribes which speak one or other of the Bantu languages.

These tribes have now spread over most of Africa from the Equator southwards as far as the Orange and Great Fish rivers. They differ enormously amongst themselves, but have at least two common features: they are black or more usually brown in colour, and they speak languages which are formed on similar principles and which are known as the 'Bantu' language family. This term 'Bantu' came into use in recent years simply because it is a common term amongst them for men or people. The name has therefore been given to all Africans who speak one or other of these 200 languages, though most tribes feel quite as foreign to others as European nations do to each other. Perhaps one might add a third common feature: their racial tenacity. Undeveloped races suddenly brought into contact with European civilization usually dwindle in numbers, even stocks of such energy and talent as the Maoris of New Zealand or the Red Indians of North America. The racial endurance and persistence of

the Bantu, and their recovery after decimation by famine, war, or pestilence are notable.

Their physical characteristics differ so much that it is hardly possible to say that any are common. Some Bantu are as tall as any Europeans, the majority perhaps noticeably smaller. Most of them have short, curly, black hair of a woolly texture and prominent mouths and teeth and thick lips. Some have a cast of countenance markedly Eastern, others tend more towards the negroid type. As a rule, they possess good voices and a musical turn of speech, and a certain natural dignity of bearing. Their voices have considerable carrying power, so that they can shout a simple message two or three times as far as most Europeans, and this may be the origin of the belief that they can transmit news rapidly over long distances by mysterious signals.

The vast majority of Bantu live between the Equator and the Zambesi and we have no concern with them in this book, but only with the 7,000,000 who live in the present Union of South Africa, the Protectorates, and the Colony of Southern Rhodesia. European settlement on a large scale has taken place in this area and the relations of Europeans and Bantu have taken special forms.

The racial composition of the southern Bantu has been estimated by Professor Dart, largely on the evidence of skull-measurements, to be one-third negro, one-quarter Bushman, and about two-fifths derived from the brown race, which, originating in Abyssinia, spread very long ago over North Africa and round the Mediterranean, even reaching the British Isles. The mixture with the Bush races seems to have taken place largely in North-East Africa before the Bantu began to spread southwards, but it recurred repeatedly until quite recent times. There are traces of a small 'Nordic' element; this link with the race

now dominant in North Europe seems to have actually come in through the original negro stock, which was in touch with branches of the Nordic race across the Sahara. The southern Bantu bear more resemblance to those of East Africa and the Nile Valley than do those of western Central Africa, where the negro strain is naturally more prominent.

As early as 1380 B.C. there was much trade between Egypt and the Indian Ocean, and this continued until the seventh century A.D. Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, traders from India and further east to Malaya and China, and, above all, the Sabaeans of Southern Persia, took part in it. It was these traders who founded most of the old towns on the east coast of Africa. They mixed to some extent with the inhabitants of the coastal belt, both the Bush races (known as Wak-wak) and the Bantu or Zenj, who at first were found only in the extreme north. Zanzibar presumably gets its name from Zenj-bar, meaning the coast of the Zenj. When a Bantu has an Arab or Semitic look, it is probably due not to mixture with Arabs in recent centuries, but to some admixture of Persian or Eastern blood which his forefathers received in remote times. There are no grounds for thinking that features of this kind indicate greater intelligence than the negroid cast.

The Bantu appear to have migrated in two main streams from the country north of Victoria Nyanza. One stream made its way southwards for some distance through country inhabited by the Bush race, and then spread westwards as well as southwards across the continent, while the other made its way due west at first and then southwards, the two streams meeting perhaps south of the mouth of the Congo. During the first few centuries of their existence, the Bantu seem to have

relied on coastal traders for their supply of iron weapons and tools. They were in the same state as the Israelites in Palestine 1,500 years before, when 'there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel . . . but all the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter and his axe, and his mattock. . . . So it came to pass in the day of battle that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people'. However, they later found out how to mine iron ore and smelt it roughly and make *badzas* and spears. This must have given them a great advantage in their wars with the Bushmen.

Clues to their movements are found in the languages now spoken in various areas. These, with some assistance from the measurements of skulls and other physical features, the comparison of tribal customs and—to a limited extent—tribal traditions, have enabled scientists to make guesses at the routes which the Bantu followed and the dates at which they passed through any given area. The only things we can be really sure of are that they made their way southwards, taking some 1,500 years to cover about 3,000 miles, and that they could not cross great rivers near the sea, but had to make their way upstream to narrower points. Almost certainly they did not move at a slow steady trickle at the rate of so many miles a year. It was more probably in a series of long treks, with intervals of hundreds of years between each. Probably they trekked only when driven by war or lack of food. They may well have had remarkable adventures and sufferings when this became necessary. Nations may have been wiped out, or cut to pieces over and over again, and no more is known of it than is known of what the inhabitants of North Germany or of the British Isles were doing before the

days of the Emperor Claudius or during the sixth century A.D. Bantu legends about the origins of tribes sometimes profess to go back to the creation of the world, but they are seldom at all reliable for more than a few hundred years at the most.

Bantu were found near the mouth of the Limpopo in 1498. It is fairly certain, from the writings of Arab travellers and from skeletons found in mines, that Bantu of a type similar to that of the present Mashona inhabited the country between the Zambesi and the Limpopo (i.e. the present Southern Rhodesia) about 1,000 years ago. It has not yet been determined whether people of this race (traditionally known as the Makaranga or Va-karanga) built the fortresses of which the ruins are now scattered over the country. Somewhat later it appears that two rather poor tribes, the Ba-kalahari and the Balala, much mixed with Bushman blood, were living on the edge of the Kalahari Desert, which existed from early times. About the end of the sixteenth century they were displaced by the Leghoya or Bataung. It was about this time, or a little earlier, that maize, now the commonest Bantu crop, was first introduced by the Portuguese from South America.

About the same time the Abambo and Amazimba came down from the north, attacked the Monomatapa, the chief ruler amongst the Mashona or Va-karanga, and then went on southwards into Natal—soon afterwards the Waroszwi or Barotse appeared from the same quarter and finally overthrew the Monomatapa. A little later the Bavenda and Bakwena came southwards and spread over much of what is now the Transvaal and Free State, while the Batlaping and Barolong occupied the Leghoya country. Meanwhile the Abambo are believed to have made their way, or pushed the Amazimba in front of

them, down into Natal, fighting and ravaging as they went along, and in Natal dissolved into a large number of tribes, which gradually spread over the whole country from the Limpopo to the Great Fish River. These tribes included many of those whose names are best known to-day: the Xosa, Pondo, Bomvana, Swazi, Amatetwa, Fingo, Tembu. Others seem to have made their way back across the mountains into the high veld.

All this southern country was very thinly inhabited by little groups of Bush people, with whom the new-comers fought. They drove them into the mountains and took captured women as slaves or wives to a sufficient extent to cause the introduction of Bushman 'clicks' into their languages. They had by now caught up with the Hottentots, or perhaps had been pushing them before them all the way southwards. Racial mixture with the Hottentots also took place. Some scientists hold that the mixture which certainly took place between the Hottentots and the Natal tribes was much too extensive to have occurred in so short a time, and that these tribes (the Nguni), or some of them, must have reached the south much earlier than the seventeenth century. It appears that the opposition of the Hottentots caused the rate of advance to slow down. Otherwise the Xosa would probably have pushed on westwards over the Fish River earlier than they did. When they were ready to do so about 1770 Boer trekkers were already collecting on the western side. The limits of the Bantu advance were thus fixed. The numbers of the tribes at this time were very small. Even in Tshaka's time all the scores of tribes in Zululand probably contained less than 100,000 people.

Great warrior kings have not been common amongst the Bantu, but in Dingiswayo and Tshaka the Zulu race produced two who created armies and extended the power

of the small Zulu clan over other tribes, which they welded into a military nation under their own despotic power. Their wars caused bloodshed and suffering over the whole of southern Africa. It is probably true to say that over 100,000 Bantu were killed or died of starvation in Tshaka's wars or in wars which were caused by his, when tribes which he had broken up wandered forth and fell on other tribes in desperation. New tribal migrations occurred, such as the long treks of the Amandebele, the Shangana, and the Angoni from Natal to Southern Rhodesia, Gazaland, and Nyasaland respectively, and the gathering of refugees in the mountains, where Moshesh formed the Basuto nation. Whole tribes vanished, being either completely extirpated or absorbed by others, whose traditions and language they adopted. The frontier wars with Europeans in the Cape, and the wars with the trekkers in Natal and the Transvaal also contributed to the upheaval. Since Tshaka's time the areas occupied by the chief tribes have not changed much, though many individuals have moved to European towns and farms. We do not know, but it is interesting to guess, what would have happened if Tshaka's career had come a few centuries earlier. Had there been no Europeans to hold it in check, the Zulu military monarchy might have lasted and developed into an orderly kingdom in which a local civilization might have grown up. However, this was not to be; the arrival of Europeans was about to dislocate the whole Bantu system.

Roughly the tribes as we know them can be classified in a few large groups or clusters.

Those known generally as the Mashona of Southern Rhodesia form one; those of South-West Africa, the Ovambo-Herero, another. In the Union of South Africa we have first and most important what is called the



Nguni or Zulu-Xosa cluster, including the hundreds of tribes between the Limpopo and the Fish River, which some think were very early arrivals, although the usual account, which we gave above, says that they arrived late. There are tribes in the present Transvaal and Southern Rhodesia which are of Nguni origin. Either because they have been more in contact with Europeans, or because of some special merits and virtues in the old Nguni stock, there seems to be a good deal of justification for the view that it has produced nearly all the greatest men in the recent history of the Bantu. Dingiswayo, Tshaka, Mziligazi, Soshangana, Moshesh, Zwangendaba, Sebitoane, all belonged to Nguni tribes. Although at present the Zulu language is very widely spoken, and Zulu customs have spread widely too, this only dates from Tshaka's time. Before, the tribes were not only distributed very differently but differed far more amongst themselves in language and habits. The numerous tribes of Swaziland, although probably of Sotho origin, are now included in the Nguni group. A small cluster, which might be considered either as a separate but related group or as a subdivision of the Nguni, is the Shangana-Tonga group, of similar stock, but speaking languages which have no Bushman clicks. They live north of the Limpopo, mostly in Portuguese territory.

Then we have the large and distinct Sotho or Sotho-Chwana cluster, now found in the Transvaal, Bechuanaland, and Basutoland, in which the Nguni tribes long resident in the Transvaal have been more or less absorbed. The Chwana tribes, it is believed, may all come from a common origin, but the Sotho are very mixed. The Basuto, in particular, were formed less than a century ago from a mixture of many tribes.

Finally, there are two shy and secretive tribes which do

not belong to any of the big clusters, the Venda or Bavenda of the Northern Transvaal, and the Va-remba, who are mostly found in Southern Rhodesia. The Bavenda are a people of considerable ability who have lived in isolation and have preserved many peculiar ideas and practices of their own. It is said they are of Shona origin and came down from Rhodesia, where they may have learnt the art of building in stone, which they have used a good deal. The Va-remba, who are only a few thousands in numbers altogether, are quite distinct from other tribes in features, language, and religious practices, and appear to have a large admixture of Semitic blood or a definitely Semitic origin. They do not marry outside their own tribe.

Tribes have been sorted into these groups largely on the basis of where they now live and the languages they now speak and the customs they cherish. But languages and customs may be of recent date, having been borrowed from neighbouring tribes or affected by contact with them. Work which is being done in the measurement of skulls may throw some light on the problem of tribal origins, and enable scientists to say with confidence and some degree of accuracy where any given tribe began and of what elements it is now composed. This mixture of various stocks is, of course, what has happened to practically all the nations in the world. It would perhaps be correct to say that the chief groups bear the same relation to one another as do the Scandinavian, German, Dutch, and British races one to another in language, physical type, and customs.

To form anything like a true picture of primitive life in South Africa, we have to think of a country without roads, much of it covered with forest or dense bush, through which only paths led from each village to its

nearer neighbours; no wells, dams, drifts, or bridges, only a few natural springs and waterholes; a country full of game and beasts of prey. In this landscape, man and his possessions looked far less important than they do now, and Nature was master. Rocks, streams, beasts, and reptiles, thunder and lightning and the changes of the seasons, could take on a meaning which, from our modern standpoint, we cannot easily realize. In the whole of southern Africa, a few centuries ago, there may have been perhaps as many people as there were in Anglo-Saxon England—that is, about 1,000,000, almost all confined to small known areas and ignorant of everything beyond a very close horizon. Though primitive enough, their life and culture were not by any means merely barbarous; in fact, they were superior to the majority of uncivilized races.

### CHAPTER III

## ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL LIFE OF THE BANTU

OBVIOUSLY the first, and often the only, concern of primitive people is to keep themselves alive and get enough to eat. Wars are not likely to be undertaken by such people merely from love of conquest or to avenge insults, nor can many of them live by seizing cattle and grain, since some one has to produce the cattle and grain first. The normal life of the Bantu before Europeans came was in keeping cattle, tilling the ground, and hunting game. They had other interests, but these had to come first.

The ruling passion of most Bantu men's life was cattle. Cattle were a movable reservoir of food, though rarely killed except to propitiate the spirits; they were the only form of money and fines; *lobola*<sup>1</sup> and gifts were paid in cattle; they were the chief if not the only mark of wealth and prosperity; they were the first and constant care of every boy and man almost from the time he was old enough to walk; and they played an essential part in many religious rites and ideas. Certain ancestral cattle were believed to have magical powers, and hairs from their tails were powerful charms. Some men kept cattle specially selected for racing and took great pride in their speed. In spite of their obsession by cattle, the Bantu knew nothing about the causes or possible cures of cattle sicknesses. Their cattle were generally lean, and they knew nothing about the selection of breeds and the development of good grasses and fodder. Nor had they

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 49, for meaning of *lobola*.

very many cattle: the average number was not more than half a dozen per man, probably much less. But they just loved cattle as cattle, without regard to their usefulness. They cared very little for other animals, though in recent years they have sometimes shown an equal passion for horses.

This love for cattle, which did not prevent their being skinned alive during certain magical ceremonies, is common amongst primitive people. For instance, the Latin word for money, *pecunia*, comes from *pecudes*, meaning herds of cattle. Because of the isolated life of the Bantu, this feeling towards cattle, which began as a habit that helped them to live in hard surroundings, was carried to excess. Cattle came to have an importance to them out of all proportion to their value. This is how they lived for 2,000 years before Europeans came, and their ingrained ideas and customs are now yielding slowly to the corrosion of new ideas.

Families living in detached kraals would keep their cattle kraaled as near as possible, often in the middle of the ring or half-circle of huts. Huts were always round and built of poles and thin branches or twigs. Each tribe had its own style of building and never varied it. Sometimes the hut had a separate roof, with eaves projecting over the side wall; sometimes the wall curved smoothly over on top and met in the centre, making a roof like that of a beehive. Building in brick was unknown, though the Shona and Venda knew something about the use of stone.

Fifteen or twenty years is probably as long as a hut would last under tropical conditions; it might be burnt by accident or moved because vermin had collected or white ants eaten into the wood. If the owner of a hut died it was considered proper to destroy it. Huts might be destroyed to enable the owner to escape from sorcery

or illness that was afflicting him. Magical rites were employed when a new hut was built. A diviner would be employed to put medicine under the threshold and round the hut, at dead of night, to keep off evil spirits. Traces even of large kraals would soon vanish when the site was deserted, and no sign of habitation remain except the stripping of the bush and perhaps the erosion of the hillsides.

Kraals were usually built on slopes; sometimes—in troubled times—on rocky kopjes. The cattle kraal was surrounded by a strong palisade to keep out wild beasts. So, generally, the family huts were also. North of the Zambesi, where slave-raiding was common, villages were more strongly defended with stockades than in the more peaceful south. As the Bantu did not make wells, kraals had to be near streams or waterholes.

In all primitive societies, people are more closely bound by family ties than civilized people are, and they tend to live in family groups. This tendency and their endless struggle with Nature gave the Bantu a very strong sense of the importance of continuing the family or tribal life and the comparative unimportance of the individual man or woman.

‘To a man of the Mashona tribes, the hope of the life everlasting does not lie in the belief that his soul is imperishable, and will have a continued functional existence after death. Nor are his motives in this life actuated by fear of punishment or hope to reward in the after life.

‘He does believe that his shade lives on after physical dissolution, that it may be perturbed by wrong done, and that, after burial of the body, it may be raised to strike at his enemies. But his wish is that it may be laid to rest by proper obsequies, and that even if called up to avenge

his own murder, it may thereafter be returned to the quiet, untroubled sleep of death.

‘Those who bear on his real hope of life everlasting are his son, and that son’s sons through generations innumerable. Dimly and wordlessly, he has always felt that which some of our biologists now tell us is fact proven, that the germ of life—his life—lives on in his son and dies not, save with the childless.

‘Therein lies his hope against the finality of death; and, unaffected by the orderless ferments of that which some of us call “civilization”, he shapes his life to the end of begetting a son to take his name, and to carry on his life down the ages.

‘That is the motive of his existence, and the keynote of his social system; and we shall not appreciate his sociology, or still less his soul in its turbid depths, if we do not hear that note sounding through the discords of circumstance, and the crash of the impact of civilization.

‘It is not merely that children are wanted. They may be wanted (as one has heard stated) because they are necessary to carry out his obsequies, and let his spirit rest in the nether world, or because the birth of daughters is a means to wealth in cattle and beer; or, because a man who is childless is a despised creature, whereas one is complimented by being called the father of his eldest son.

‘One does not quarrel with these reasons. As reasons they have some truth in them, so far as they go. But they are of a pettiness when compared with the strongest specific tendency in the mind of the Shona—the wish for a son to carry on his life’.<sup>1</sup>

In some parts of the country the family kraals stood separately, a certain number of them usually forming

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from C. Bullock, *The Mashona* (Juta).

some kind of group, but each well away from the others. In other areas, particularly towards the south and east, kraals were grouped more closely, forming villages containing as many as fifty families. In Bechuanaland large towns existed with several thousand inhabitants. But even in these towns people went out to till their own gardens outside, and there was no trace of the specialized life which usually is found in towns.

A family kraal would usually contain a man and his wife or wives, their children, who lived with their respective mothers in separate huts; and in all probability several other relations—possibly grown-up sons and their wives, who had not yet formed kraals of their own, and unmarried brothers or cousins. Under this system, no one was ever left without support, except in time of war or famine, when every one might perish. The available food was shared. No particular effort was made to keep old people alive when they were evidently very ill. But no woman, child, or old person would lack support, its nearest male relations being bound to care for it. The consistent way in which this rule was carried out would go far to justify the whole of Bantu custom, pointless though some of its details may seem under modern conditions. No doubt there was often jealousy or really bad ill-feeling between the different families collected in one kraal, but the father's authority was considerable and would be used to suppress it.

Uncles on the father's side had many duties towards his children; and aunts on the mother's side treated their nephews and nieces with the same abundant affection that the Bantu woman lavished on her own. The children of these aunts and uncles were reckoned as brothers and sisters by their cousins. A dead man's younger brother was generally expected to adopt his wife if she had no



other means of support. If possible, the family group should be kept alive. Other uncles and aunts were friendly, but less was required of them by tribal law.

If a man had several wives, one was usually the 'great wife'—not necessarily the oldest or first, but usually the one for whom most *lobola* had been paid. Even in an ordinary family, her children had certain special rights, and the eldest son of a chief's great wife succeeded his father as chief. However, in the kraal there was little differentiation amongst the wives, except that one of them might be specially detailed to do the cooking. Women left their parents on marrying and were absorbed in their husbands' families, though in some tribes their fathers and brothers had to provide their clothes even after they were married.

The chief daily events in the lives of these family groups were their meals: a very early snack, eaten casually about dawn, and a very large meal in the evening, when the day's work was over and every one had bathed in the nearest stream. This evening meal was a family gathering at which places were taken according to age and sex, and every one was bound by strict rules regarding, for instance, the persons whose bowls he might share. People washed their hands before the meal and their mouths afterwards. Now let us see how their supplies of porridge and milk and other foods and drinks found their way to their eating bowls.

Very few actions of ordinary life were left to people's own choice. Sowing and reaping, hunting, cattle-tending, the siting of huts, the distribution of the family amongst them, the greetings which must be exchanged before one began to discuss business, the members of the family who might speak to each other or use each other's names or words that sounded like them, or even look at each other;

the parts of the kraal across which they might walk, the people they must marry, or must not marry, were ruled by customs and taboos which varied enormously from tribe to tribe but which in all were more or less strict. Amongst them were strict rules governing the allocation of work to men and women.

If a man and his wife were making a journey, she carried the burdens while he walked freely with his axe and assegai, ready to kill game or defend the two of them. Men did all the hunting and fighting and the heavier work of breaking in new fields. Men cut down trees, but women collected firewood and carried huge faggots. When huts had to be built, the men did the work that was heavier but did not take so long to do, such as cutting and fixing the wooden framework and thatching the hut. Women wove in the smaller twigs into the framework and plastered them over with mud, and made the hut's floor of liquid cowdung (sometimes mixed with ant-heap and ox-blood). A floor had to be re-made every six months. A hearth, seats, and ledges to serve as shelves were built up from it. In a few areas where iron was worked—for instance in central Mashonaland—men dug iron or copper from the ground and smelted it and made metal weapons and ornaments. Both sexes could weave baskets, sacks and sleeping mats, and most people made their own wooden bowls, stools, spoons, and ornaments. Many of them showed great skill and patience in carving and working bone, horn, and ivory. Containers were made from calabashes. Men made clothing, usually from the skins of cattle and game, which they 'brayed' or made soft by scraping, beating, rubbing, and greasing. Women sometimes made garments from bark. Most people wore only a small apron or kilt and sometimes in cold weather a *kaross* or sheepskin.

There was hardly any trade. Sometimes a skilled

craftsman made iron tools or carved wood or sewed skins together to make *karosses*, and exchanged them for meat, cattle, or other articles. This happened in a few tribes only, and even in these was confined to certain families, who were hereditary iron-workers, &c. Some men also specialized in making shields and headrings (the waxen ring which old men wore worked into their hair). But there were no markets, and even this rough barter was unusual.

Women did all the pottery making; they made excellent jugs and pots from clay which they baked and polished with soot. A pot took a week to complete.

Mining was very primitive, and some tribes knew nothing about it. Others knew enough to mine surface iron or copper ore, and smelt it in charcoal furnaces fanned by bellows made from sheep's bladders. The metal that they finally extracted was soft and malleable, but could be used for spear-heads, arrow points, *badzas*,<sup>1</sup> knives, axes, and also for bracelets, necklaces, and rings. When fire was needed for this purpose or any other it was usually supplied by a brand from the kraal's hearth, but if there was no fire near by it could be made by twirling a hard stick in a notch in some soft wood and igniting some dry grass. In Eastern Rhodesia some tribes did a little very simple gold-mining, either in shallow mines or by washing river sands for alluvial gold.

The animals kept by the Bantu included cattle, sheep, goats, and fowls, of which cattle were by far the most important. Not all kraals had sheep or fowls, but most had goats. The smaller animals were generally tended by small boys. The grown men were responsible for the cattle, though they usually left young men or big boys to look after them during the day. When there was no urgent

<sup>1</sup> Hoes.

work—ploughing, harvesting, woodcutting, or hunting—to be done, the men went off to collect herbs or do errands of one sort or other, or perhaps to stay all day at the head-quarters of the village or the local chief's kraal. There they sat about, either doing small jobs of work carving wood or braying skins or weaving grass, or merely talking and drinking or perhaps even dozing. Towards evening they returned home and the cattle were milked and kraaled. No woman could take part in either process or even come near the beasts and their kraal. If men wanted to talk privately they retired to the cattle kraal. Sometimes grain pits were dug under the ground of the kraal, and the heads of families were sometimes buried there when they died. The father usually divided his cattle amongst his wives if he had more than one. They fed their children with the milk, and could use the cattle as *lobola* when the children grew up. Some men had no cattle of their own, and such men sometimes looked after the cattle of richer ones and were given a beast as wages. The milk was always drunk sour—never fresh or boiled.

Hunting might be undertaken on the spur of the moment, if some likely quarry was spotted on a man's way to or from the kraal, or there might be an expedition to set traps and snares, or to hunt in company with other men. Dangerous game, of course, needed a large party of men, and sometimes a chief organized a hunt in which all his men took part, and on the proceeds of which he had the first claim. Traps or nets might be set for game of all kinds, even for the mighty elephant, who might be lured into a pit or ambush by means of strong scent poured on the ground. Game might be run down with dogs or killed with spears, or small game and birds might be killed with sticks flung at them as they ran or flew. Magic was used to make dogs and weapons more

deadly, and there were various taboos<sup>1</sup> which forbade hunters to do one thing or another—all very absurd in our eyes—for instance, to be seen by the dying buck, to mention its name, or to allow women to come with them. Game was much more abundant in former times than now, and some parts of the country swarmed with herds of buck, hundreds together at once. However, as the hunters had only spears, sticks, bows and arrows, it was by no means certain that they would always kill, and anything killed had to be shared amongst several people. So it is not safe to assume that they got a great deal of meat. But they had the pleasure of hunting, which most races have always enjoyed. Besides the meat, the skins, horns, bones, and teeth of animals were useful.

Fish were sometimes caught by people near the coast, but most Bantu thought fish were unclean and seldom ate them, though sometimes inland tribes speared them in rivers or caught them in basket traps or by draining shallow pools.

Sheep and fowls were kept to be killed and eaten or used for sacrifices, the sheep being the fat-tailed kind, not wool-bearing merinos. Goats and cattle were kept to be milked, and as a rule would only be eaten if they died, or if they had to be killed for sacrifice, or if starvation was upon the land. The milk could be stored in calabashes or wooden containers or in closely woven string baskets or bags. Milk and large quantities of thick meal porridge were the staple foods of the Bantu, though they always liked flavourings and relishes—herbs, varieties of grain, spinach, pumpkin leaves, bits of meat, and even caterpillars, locusts, field mice and other forms of food which

<sup>1</sup> See Halliday Sutherland, *Lapland Journey*, for an account of similar beliefs surviving to-day amongst primitive people in the far North.

do not appeal to Europeans. The women could prepare a large number of different dishes out of the simple ingredients which were available. And they had wild fruits, berries and herbs and roots. Some kinds of animal food were taboo, that is to say, forbidden—for instance, the tribe's totem animal if it had one, and unclean things like carrion birds. Meat could not be kept, so if there was much available it had to be eaten at once. The Bantu never formed a habit of saving, and usually used up their grain rapidly while it lasted. As a result, they had in most years to go through a very lean period between August and October. They were as spasmodic as many Europeans, and would work hard by fits and starts, eat and drink gaily when food was plentiful, and starve patiently when it wasn't.

On the whole, though the men had the duty of rising at night to look after the cattle and drive off any beasts of prey which were hanging round the kraal, their share of the work seems to have been the lighter. But there were more women than men, so boys and men must have had to run more risk of dying or being killed in hunting or war, or performing other dangerous duties.

Women had to do all the tilling of fields, all the fetching of wood and water and all the weeding. They shared with the men the reaping and threshing of crops. Tilling was not light work. In hot valleys it might be really trying even for strong women. They did not dig deep, and as a rule they (or the men) chose soil with plenty of leaf mould, where trees had been. But when all digging had to be done with sticks, as it originally had, it must have been slow and heavy going. *Badzas* became fairly common in some areas, but others never had them till European traders or missionaries came.

The methods of cultivating were simple and bad, and

never improved during the many centuries before Europeans came. The tribe was strictly bound by the chief's orders about the time of sowing and reaping. There was no fertilizing of the ground, except that when it was first cleared the stumps, smaller branches, and green stuff were burnt, the ashes forming a kind of fertilizer. Sowing was very careless and the ground was never sufficiently ploughed—it was hardly scratched. Since so much of the soil was sandy, rocky, or shallow, and the rainfall often small, tribes needed a large amount of land for cultivation and grazing. Some reliance was placed on magic; the time for sowing was settled by the authorities after reference to the stars, and magic was used to bring good rains. In some tribes magic was applied to the growing crops. Substances believed to have magical qualities were burnt and the smoke allowed to drift over the fields. Or a tree was treated by the diviner and given power to watch over the crops round it. No crops could be sown or reaped till the chief's fields had been done, and he, of course, followed the advice of his diviner. While the crops were growing, the tribe had to observe certain taboos in order to keep off hail, drought, and locusts. Fields were used until their fertility declined, and then either left to lie fallow or not used again at all. Each woman in a kraal was supposed to have her own field or fields, the grain from which was hers and was stored in a separate pit or grain bin for the use of her and her children, but often women joined in parties to cultivate the land, food and drink being provided by the one whose land was being worked. Sometimes labour was hired and paid for in milk or cattle. The Bantu always preferred to work in company and to sing as they worked.

Besides maize, which came to be their chief crop, they

grew millet or kaffir corn, sugar cane, sweet potatoes, peas, beans, pumpkins, melons, and ground-nuts. Most of these were not staple foods, but flavourings. These crops would all be sown together in the same ground, each being carefully gathered as it came up. Women ground the grain on stone slabs, a slow toilsome process. Their working hours each day were usually from four to eleven in the morning.

Agriculture was 'communal' to this extent, that families worked together and the whole tribe worked on the same lines. Any one who dared to do things in his own way was liable to a charge of sorcery or of causing offence to the spirits by his imprudence and so bringing harm to the whole tribe. This impeded progress. Men who did too well would be considered to be acting improperly in rising too near the chief's level, and might be removed. This objection to experiment may have begun with the object of making sure that every one should at least get the usual crop and not become a burden by having made unsuccessful experiments. A communal system existed until less than two hundred years ago in England and until less than twenty years ago in Russia.

Much of the grain, and all that was not really needed for food, was used by the women to make beer, usually very light but of some food value, which was regarded by the average man with a degree of esteem second only to that inspired by his cattle. He was prepared to live on it for days at a time if need be. It was not drunk at meals, but was handed round to visitors and used for offerings and religious rites, and it formed the basis for long set beer-drinks.

When grain and therefore beer was plentiful, beer parties took place fairly often, either on the spur of the moment, or at a regular date in the month, or to celebrate



a wedding or birth. They were long and very cheerful affairs, with much talking, singing, dancing, and playing games, which grew more and more wild and riotous as the evening wore on. But they seldom led to violence or squalid orgies such as may happen when Bantu in the slums of European cities get drunk on spirits or the kind of beer now made in towns.

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Of school in the European sense, Bantu boys and girls knew nothing, but they had a definite and systematic method of education. In a child's first years it was the subject of many magical rites and ceremonies, and was exposed to many risks both from infantile diseases and from the practice of ramming excessive quantities of thick porridge into its mouth. Weakly children usually died young. If strong enough to survive, the child grew up certain of being the object of its mother's intense affection. Parents rarely smacked or whipped children, though they frightened them with stories of ogres, spirits, great snakes, and boggy-men. Fathers were perhaps more severe towards their children than European fathers, but they were generally very fond of them in their way. Mothers would always go without food rather than let even a grown-up son or daughter starve.

Though the child generally learnt to demand anything it wanted as a right, it was saved from being completely spoiled by the fact that it usually grew up amongst several other children of its own age, from its own or neighbouring kraals. In their company it toddled about and had its first lessons in behaviour—how to treat its elders with respect, how to receive gifts and how to eat at meals. Sometimes all the boys of one age in a large area were collected from time to time and trained together.

As soon almost as they could walk, boys were put to

minding the kraal's goats and scaring birds from the crops. Girls began by nursing younger children, fetching and carrying wood and water, grinding corn and sweeping out huts, and learning how to cook. By the time they were twelve, they were more or less proficient in most of the skills required of women. At about the same age boys were ready to be promoted to take care of cattle. This promotion gave small boys great pride, for they had grown up knowing how their elders doted on cattle. Looking after goats and cattle gave plenty of opportunity of loafing or playing with the other youngsters, but it meant being out in all kinds of weather and sometimes defending the herd against wild dogs or bigger animals, as the boy David did 3,000 years ago. 'Thy servant kept his father's sheep and there came a lion and a bear and took a lamb out of the flock. And I went out after him and smote him and delivered it out of his mouth; and when he arose against me I caught him by his beard and smote him and slew him.' Many were not so lucky as David in their battles, and were killed or died in boyhood from one cause or another.

Elder brothers usually made sure that every boy learnt all that he ought, by the simple method of making him do it. In the process each growing boy picked up a great deal of information about the veld, trees, grasses, weather, animals, insects, and a thousand and one allied subjects. Most Bantu were good botanists and zoologists, and their languages had large numbers of words to describe different kinds of trees, animal game, and cattle.

Curiously enough, they paid little attention to the stars, perhaps because fear of preying beasts and spirits kept them in their huts at night. Their scientific progress was handicapped by their fear of sorcery, which made any one with slightly original ideas liable to be exterminated.

Girls played with small clay or wooden dolls. Boys played with clay models of oxen and had friendly fighting games, or learnt to throw sticks to kill birds and animals, make traps and snares and shoot birds or wild pigs with bows and arrows. Both boys and girls had games in which they asked each other riddles or guessed things, and boys also juggled with stones, rode calves and pretended to be animals or hunters. Though the total amount they learnt was by our standards very small, it did train them very well for the kind of life they were to lead and the kind of behaviour that would be expected of them.

Both boys and girls usually finished their 'education' in their middle or later teens at an initiation 'school' or lodge. These schools varied a great deal from tribe to tribe, and it is hardly possible to give a description that will cover all. As a rule, a fairly large number of boys or girls went to the 'school' at one time—perhaps twenty. The usual features were that they spent a period of a few days, weeks or months in the 'school', that during this time they were secluded or cut off from other people, except those who were instructing them; and that they had to undergo some more or less painful and severe kind of beating or other torture, perhaps with the object of teaching them to stand pain without crying out (if that valuable accomplishment can be taught). Boys who were known to be self-willed and troublesome might be given a specially rough time in order to teach them manners.

There were usually dances and numerous rites, mostly in forms laid down by tradition, which had probably lost their meaning. Although much of this was pointless, or even positively objectionable, there was also a good deal of moral teaching. Much of it was concerned with tribal traditions and etiquette, but it included definite moral instruction, which, in spite of its odd accompaniments,

does seem to have tended towards developing a standard of behaviour much above that of merely barbarous people. But it is not at all easy to know exactly what was taught in the initiation 'schools', since the proceedings were secret. Although Bantu have sometimes described them after turning Christian, they have usually been through them only as pupils and do not necessarily know the details and real purpose of much that happened in them.

At this point, though they had nothing much to do with 'school', we ought to mention the music and literature of the Bantu. For people who had no idea of writing things down they were remarkably strong in both. Almost all Bantu sing well, having the resonant head cavities characteristic of the negro race. They sang at work and at play—love songs, working songs, war songs, often to tunes and strains which when recorded by Europeans have been admitted by large numbers of people to be very charming, though they did not frame tunes in the regular metrical style which we like. Not all Bantu singing, however, was sweet to listen to; much of it, like some men's singing amongst more civilized races, was just brutal roaring, and when they imitated the sound of their musical instruments they could not make a really attractive noise, these instruments being very crude.

The commonest ones were the drum (usually made of wood or sometimes of pottery, with a hide head), the bow, which in a very large number of forms was used to make music when twanged, and the flute or pipe, made from a reed, horn, bamboo, or bone. They had rattles for their wrists and ankles when dancing, and trumpets made from sable horns. There were also such instruments as the *mbira*, a very simple kind of piano, from which music was wrung by striking small keys of iron fixed to a hollow calabash or other sounding board. Musical instruments

were preserved with great care and pride and handed on from father to son.

Music and literature shade into each other, since Bantu literature was all spoken or sung. It included a large store of legends, tales, fables, stories of heroes, monsters and ogres, and proverbs and riddles containing the accumulated wisdom of the tribe. Songs for mourning, for weddings, for hunting, for love, satirical songs—all very vivid and full of picturesque details and not regardful of fact—were common. The Bantu specialized in a kind of art common amongst primitive people, namely the praise song, or recital of the chief's merits, exploits, family history, and miscellaneous distinctions and attributes, usually poured out in a very sonorous and dramatic manner by the chief's official *mbongo*.

All these were recited or sung round the fire in the evenings or at beer parties or tribal meetings. Usually they were handed down in a tribe from generation to generation, though those who composed them or brought them from one kraal to another had a sort of special right to them as long as they lived. The fables were usually about animals, and often illustrated the cunning of the smaller animals and their successful use of wiles against brute force. The hare was the hero of many exploits of this kind. It has been complained that the lessons of these fables are not generally highly moral according to European ideas, but to the Bantu mind morality lay in using all your powers for the good of your family and tribe rather than in being unselfish towards the world in general.

Age and character were the chief qualities which entitled a man to honour, and no one could expect it on other grounds, except for being of illustrious lineage, descended from a chief. Every one's place in life was fixed in his own little world by his age and other facts

which it was not in his power to alter, but the Bantu ideal was a rough kind of equality, subject to the rights of elders over younger people and of the chief over all.

Each family being self-supporting, it had little connexion with others except through kinship. Above the family came the clan. Above the clan came the tribe. In some tribes, men must take their wives from their own clans, in others they were strictly forbidden to do so. Sometimes clan feeling was so strong that all the men of a clan regarded each other as brothers. Sometimes the clan consisted of people living in the same area; sometimes they were scattered over a wide area and mixed up with others. The names which men bore varied according to the tribe. The Nguni for instance had three names: (1) a sort of 'Christian' name, something connected with their birth or the name of an ancestor; (2) the clan name or *isibongo*, corresponding to our surname, sometimes the name of the founder of the clan; (3) a courtesy clan name, usually that of some ancient clan hero, only used when the speaker wished to be especially polite to the man he was addressing.

Tribes varied in size. Some were only a few hundreds in number. The bigger ones were divided into sub-tribes, or groups of sub-tribes—each usually ruled by a headman or *induna*, assisted by a council or assembly of heads of families. As a rule each man considered himself bound by loyalty to his immediate superior, rather than to the final head of the tribe, who might be a very distant person. It was not uncommon for the sections of a tribe to quarrel and fight. In theory all the men in a tribe were descended from one ancestor, and no doubt the bulk of them sometimes were. But there was so much absorption of foreign men and women into every Bantu

tribe that there were very few in which all the men were related.

Some tribes were allied, either by common descent or because they had the same totems. Totems were not much used by the Nguni, but amongst the Sotho, Chwana, and Shona they were observed, and the people of half a dozen tribes would have the same totem animal—for instance, the well-known group of Chwana tribes, which had the crocodile totem. We shall say a little more about totems in the next chapter. It was not uncommon for clans to have a different totem from other clans in the same tribe, but the same as clans in other tribes.

The sub-tribes or groups of tribes were ruled by headmen and chiefs. They were usually related to the great chief of the tribe or nation, but they did not always obey his orders, while he was not bound by their promises nor responsible for their actions.

Chiefs usually succeeded to their position by hereditary right, as the eldest son of the dead chief's great wife, or as his nearest male relation. The rules of succession were, however, very complicated, and varied from one tribe to another. In some tribes the effect was that an oldish man almost always succeeded as chief. In others it was possible for a young man, or even a child, to succeed. Then a regent had to be appointed—usually the nearest uncle, brother or cousin on the father's side, if he was a grown man. Regencies frequently led to quarrels, sometimes to small wars and to the breaking up of tribes. It was a point of honour to remember the chief's ancestors for many generations back; sometimes as many as ten or a dozen were recorded, perhaps more or less accurately.

A chief's huts might be larger and more grandly ornamented than those of his subjects, but there was not

usually a great deal of difference between his dress, food, and house and theirs. Small chiefs sometimes worked in their own fields. Great chiefs had several huts and a staff of servants. The chief's position was a mixture of formality and informality. All the men of the tribe could approach him and speak to him, but they must do so respectfully and sit on the ground when speaking to him. Only the chief might wear the skins of leopards or lions. The tribe regarded loyalty to him as a high duty and took pride in recounting his long descent and other merits. The status of the chief was highest in the Venda tribe, in which also women might be chiefs or at least hold almost the same powers, which was possible in very few tribes. Chiefs invariably had high-sounding titles, conferred by the *mbongo* and repeated by the tribe, such as 'slayer of many elephants', 'shaker of the earth'. After his death the chief became a tribal god, so it was obviously desirable to please him in the flesh.

But very few chiefs were despots or dictators. Europeans are rather too prone to remember one or two famous tyrants like Tshaka, and imagine that the ordinary Bantu ruler was a person of the same type. But it was not so. Even Tshaka was killed when he became quite unbearable. Dingiswayo, from whom he inherited his kingdom, is believed to have been inspired by what he had heard about European governments and armies. Normally chiefs were bound by the advice of their councils of headmen or *indunas*, who were expected to observe and apply tribal laws and customs. *Indunas* were usually old and cautious, addicted to the delivery of long speeches and the very deliberate discussion of business. Frequently a chief had a chief minister or adviser, often an hereditary official. The council of *indunas* could be overruled by a general assembly of the men of the tribe,



whose decisions were final, though it was not likely that they would decide anything against both the chief and the *indunas*.

A chief could argue with his council or assembly, and persuade it to follow his opinion, but he would seldom dare to go against the two combined in an important matter, especially one which concerned the ancient traditions of the tribe. The death of a chief was sometimes the occasion for changing customs. Otherwise, even demands for change had to be disguised as reversions to ancient custom. It was only in time of war or national danger that the chief was given unlimited powers. In this he resembled the President of the United States and, in fact, most governments. Normally he had to rely a good deal on his own eloquence and on that of his *mbongo* and other supporters—and to some extent on the tricks of the tribal sorcerers.

Similarly, although the chief had large herds of cattle and controlled all the lands occupied by the tribe, his powers over cattle and land were rather those of a trustee than an owner. The numbers of the herds were kept up by fines, taxes paid when men died and left cattle, taxes from new members joining the tribe, sometimes tribute paid by a conquered tribe. The tribe were expected to supply cattle for the *lobola* of the chief's sons, to till and reap the chief's lands, and to subscribe cattle for a war-fund when war occurred. But these assets had to be used by the chief for the good of the tribe. He was expected to make gifts for good service in war. He had to feed tribesmen who came to see him, and provide meat and beer at the great annual gatherings and feasts when all the men of the tribe mustered. In time of famine the duty of helping the whole tribe fell to him. Generosity was an essential virtue in a chief, and if he were not

generous he would find his followers slipping away sulkily to join some more open-handed rival.

The chief allotted land to sub-chiefs and families for their use, but he was expected to use this trust for the common good. Every man had a right to a share of the available arable land, wood, water, and pasture, and, once given it, he could not be deprived of it so long as he used it and paid a small tax to the chief. The chief might allow strangers to use land, but he certainly could not give or sell land to them or even to men of his own tribe. Cattle could be private property; land could not.

It goes without saying that many chiefs were restrained from tyranny and fraud only by knowing that their subjects might leave them if they ruled too badly. However, on the whole, the system worked. The tribesmen were taught in youth that loyalty to the chief was their first duty, and they carried it out. Chiefs usually did their duty passably well. So long as the main object of all Bantu was to keep things true to ancient custom, the system of government expressed public opinion well enough, whatever its faults might have been in a more complicated situation. The essential thing to remember is that fierce tyrants like Tshaka were exceptions, certainly not the rule. Even peaceful despots like Khama were unusual. The ordinary chief has left little mark on events and no great reputation, largely because he never was an all-powerful dictator.

Practically all chiefs relied a good deal on magic and magicians. We shall deal with this subject in the next chapter. But here it may be noted that a chief was usually the head magician of his tribe. He had magical cattle and superior medicines of his own, and was expected to show skill as a rainmaker—a good rainmaker would always attract followers. Moreover, he acted as intermediary

between the tribe and the spirits of his ancestors, who were believed to watch over its welfare. The tribal magicians or diviners (*izanusì*) worked with him. If a man was growing too rich they very often accused him of sorcery and slew him, his property being taken by the chief. Vile though some of their practices were, the diviners were undoubtedly the most intelligent men in the tribe, and in a crude, underhand way they gave the tribe the benefit of their brains in most matters that arose. The grave of a chief—usually a cleft amongst rocks—was a holy place, where sacrifices might be made and his spirit invoked. The tribe mourned a dead chief for months and sometimes repeated the mourning annually.

Like the chief with his powers over the tribe, so the father of a family had a right to unquestioning obedience from his wife and children, subject to similar checks. The chief's authority originally evolved from the father's; we find traces in ancient Roman law of a very similar state of things. In theory, even middle-aged men, if still living in their father's kraals, had to obey him, and deserved drastic punishment if they failed. Even if they had left his kraal, they had to send him presents and support him if he needed it. Conversely, he had duties towards them. Women and children owed respect and obedience towards their husbands and parents respectively. But the wife had the right to return to her parents' kraal, taking her *lobola* cattle, if her husband ill-treated her, and in practice women were able to hold their own pretty well, while children certainly did not obey their mothers much; they knew that their mothers doted on them, and they did and took what they wanted. Even fathers, stern as they were, rarely beat children. Elder brothers had fathers' powers and duties towards younger

nes. All grown-up male relatives had a right to be consulted about important business, such as marriages and the transfer of cattle, and might also be called on for help.

We have said that war was not the chief interest of Bantu life. But every man was a warrior and was kept in training by hunting. Small riots and skirmishes might start through a quarrel at a beer party, or wars might occur between two tribes because of a squabble about a chief's *lobola* or the restoration of some one who had fled from justice. War in the European sense of a systematic employment of every available resource to overcome the enemy, carried on relentlessly year after year, was rare. There was a good deal of minor bickering because of rival claims for land, for, even 200 years ago, it was difficult to feed the population from the available land. There were few killed in these little wars, one side usually giving way.

What might almost be called 'friendly' battles were sometimes arranged between neighbouring tribes and clans. On an appointed day, or on the spur of the moment, the warriors would meet and fight either as a body or in the persons of selected champions. Their women usually sat on the nearest kopjes shouting encouragement. A fair number of bruises and wounds would be inflicted, and perhaps a number of men would be killed. After the battle the war was over; men taken prisoner might have to pay cattle as a ransom, but the two sides would no longer treat each other as enemies.

There might be a more or less regular war between two tribes, with a series of raids and battles, which would end only when one tribe had agreed to pay tribute to the other, or, in some extreme cases, had been forced to come completely under the other's control.

At long intervals, perhaps only once in 100 years, there were really big wars, which were as bad in their way as anything that the most highly civilized nations have ever produced. They arose in the course of the migrations which carried the Bantu southwards, or through the example of Arabs or, perhaps, of European slave-raiders, or through the ability and ambition of men like Tshaka. The most famous of these great wars was the long series which Tshaka either waged or caused indirectly, and which were in progress when Europeans first began to travel into the interior of South Africa.

For the more serious kinds of war, most Bantu tribes used the spear, or assegai (they seem to have got this word from the Arabs), which might be used either for throwing or stabbing. Men who used throwing spears needed several. Sometimes they used both kinds. Tshaka favoured the short stabbing spear because it forced his men to charge the enemy or be killed by the enemy's missiles if they did not. This would be good tactics for the side with more and braver men than the other, but it would not have paid against guns or even really good bowmen. The Bantu did not use the bow much in war, perhaps because of the lack of good wood, but they used it for hunting. Besides the spear they had axes and knobkerries, sometimes daggers, and, of course, shields for defence. The shield was made of stiff hide on a wooden framework, and might be round, oval, or pointed, according to tribal custom. In tribes where the 'army' was well-organized, as under Tshaka, the shields were of red, black, or white hide to distinguish regiments.

A regiment or company, commonly called an *impi* (Zulu), was led by an *induna*. In most tribes it was an irregular body, which did not aspire to any kind of drill or battle formation. But in Tshaka's army, for instance,

it was in its way very highly disciplined. The men spent their lives in expectation of war, and although they did not drill, and marched as they pleased—covering amazing distances—they had very elaborate dances and displays, which took the place of ceremonial parades, and which they performed with great precision. In battle they carried out simple movements accurately—for instance, the deployment of the flanks of an *impi* to form two horns which curved round the enemy's sides. There were no junior officers or N.C.O.s under the *induna*, though, no doubt, certain men would be recognized as natural leaders.

The courage and initiative shown by Bantu warriors was rather remarkable. To some extent, they may have been urged on by knowing that if they failed they would be slaughtered by their disappointed chief, but the same qualities were often shown even when this stimulus was lacking. It must be remembered that, unlike most other races, they had no belief that a man who died in battle for his nation was in some way earning a reward in the hereafter. Moslems, for instance, have it, but the fighting qualities of the Bantu had no such basis.

Tshaka used to plant his *impis* out in large military kraals. They were not allowed to marry till the king permitted it. They acted as police, messengers, and labour corps. They had to look after the king's cattle, but received very little food. The king might keep a watch on them through a representative or spy, but their discipline, which was undoubtedly good, was maintained more or less voluntarily—in fact, as a matter of honour. The obedience and devotion of the Zulu *impis* display the loyalty of the Bantu at its strongest, unworthy though the cause was to which it was devoted.

Amongst other functions, the chief was the principal

judge of the tribe, just as in theory the king is still the head of the British legal system. Bantu law was extensive and strict, and was sufficiently advanced to admit the difference between a 'tort' and a 'crime'—that is to say, between a wrongful action which was the private affair of the parties concerned and one which was an offence against the tribe and its head. They had, however, no idea of a 'contract'—that is, an agreement to do something, under a penalty if it was not done—though they had rules for agreements about things which could be seen and handled. Law was almost wholly governed by tribal custom, for chiefs, as we have said, were not encouraged to make improvements in it.

Cases of 'tort' could be settled by heads of families and heads of districts, and only went to the chief's court if they could not be settled earlier. They were usually disputes about *lobola* or damage to crops or some barter transaction. Crimes, however, had to go to the chief, who collected fines for them. They included witchcraft (sorcery), murder and other forms of violence against fellow tribesmen or women. Frequently the assistance of the tribal diviners was called in, to find a culprit or to decide an accused man's guilt. Ordeal, though never very common, was sometimes used, as in Anglo-Saxon and Norman England. It took the form of giving the accused man poison to drink and charging him with sorcery if he did not suffer. If, as was more likely, he suffered violently, he might be lucky enough to get a counter-medicine. The diviners usually contrived to make the ordeal give the result they wanted.

The trial was held by the chief amongst his council; any member of the tribe could usually attend and give evidence or argue the law. Speeches were often terribly long, but the general effect was that justice was done

according to public opinion. Usually people knew fairly well what the real facts were and wanted to see justice done properly, but unpopular people always suffered under this system. Innocent people were often condemned and guilty ones may sometimes have escaped. Trials were not held in this way when any one was charged with sorcery; then the diviner's decision was final.

Death was the punishment for grave offences, including sorcery, though sometimes an offender was allowed to escape and leave the tribe. Minor crimes could be punished by having a hand or an ear cut off, a form of punishment very common in England until a couple of hundred years ago. The Bantu had no prisons. Fines might also be imposed, payable in cattle. Usually the person who suffered through a crime received compensation from the criminal. Families were liable for the wrongs done by their members. Even a man's debts had to be paid by his family if he died.

In cases where a man had harmed another, the object of tribal law, in some tribes at least, was not to punish the offender, but to make him atone to the other or his family for the wrong done. Having done this, he was restored to the good opinion of society and to his own self-respect. The past was washed out.

Men have been happy under very different laws, and there is something in the view that the real object of law is stability—to let every one know his rights and duties. Provided he does, and has no acute sense of grievance, it does not matter very much how odd the laws may seem.

In any legal system, the laws governing marriage are important, especially when the family is the social unit. Amongst the Bantu, as we have shown, the family stuck



together through life far more closely than it now does amongst Europeans. Marriage was not arranged just by the two people concerned, as it usually is with us. Sometimes tribal law was such that there was one person whom a man must marry—the daughter of his mother's brother. Even when this was not the rule, it was usually the two families which arranged the match. In some tribes there was a custom of seizing a wife by force, but even this was arranged in advance. The discussion about a marriage might go on for a long time, perhaps for years, each side amicably trying to make out that it was a bad bargain for them. Finally, it was cemented by feasts and the payment of *lobola* or *boxadi*, usually half a dozen cattle, though in bad times much smaller payments were made, and in times of acute poverty the payment might be merely nominal. No marriage was valid without *lobola*. Even if two people made a run-away match, *lobola* must be paid afterwards, or the marriage was invalid. The cattle might belong to the man or might be provided by his father, uncles, or brothers. It was common for the whole family to have to contribute, since few men had six cattle of their own. Similarly the cattle were not all kept by the bride's father. Other male relations might claim one or more each.

*Lobola* was, emphatically, *not* regarded as the buying of a wife. It was a fee paid in the Bantu's beloved cattle, which legalized the marriage, linked the pair with the undying tradition of the tribe, and provided a guarantee for both parties. It compensated the wife's family for the loss of her services in the fields, though, as *lobola* was sometimes paid in instalments spread out over years, this cannot always have been of much good to them. If the marriage was dissolved, as marriages sometimes were, through the husband's ill-treating the wife or deserting

her, he could not reclaim his cattle. It was thus a guarantee of good behaviour on his part. On the other hand, if the girl bore him no children or could not work, he could send her home and reclaim his cattle.

Some people regard *lobola* as a most valuable institution. Most Bantu do so still, including even educated ones, and they deny that it rendered woman the inferior in any way. Other people assert that, though it strengthened family life (which may or may not be a good thing), it caused endless grievances and quarrels, and burdens of debt which sometimes dragged on for generations.

Before closing this chapter, we must stress again the fact that cattle were the central interest of life, in spite of the fact that the Bantu lived largely by agriculture. Wealth was reckoned in cattle, many religious and magical beliefs were connected with cattle, men spent much of their lives just looking at cattle, admiring them and talking about them; fathers of families were often buried in the cattle kraal; and *lobola* was always if possible paid in cattle. 'At heart the Bantu were small peasant farmers, interested primarily in their domestic economies. To disregard this prosaic but nevertheless fundamental fact in favour of the numerous odd or picturesque customs which gave so much colour to their life leads to a quite erroneous impression of their culture as it existed in the past.'<sup>1</sup>

But it must equally be borne in mind that land was obviously even more essential to them than cattle, and although Bantu and Europeans have had frontier squabbles about cattle, the real root of all the friction between the two races has always been, and still is, land.

<sup>1</sup> Schapera, *Cambridge History of South Africa*.

## CHAPTER IV

### BANTU MAGIC AND RELIGION

WE have had to mention magic and tribal religious beliefs several times already, since they were interwoven so closely with the whole of life and law. We will now deal more fully with these points.

It is natural to begin any account of a people's beliefs and religious practices with a description of the supreme being whom they believe to exist. We shall do so here, though it is somewhat misleading. The Bantu did indeed believe, when they gave the matter any thought, that there was a supreme being, known by different names, such as Unkulunkulu, Tilo, and Mwari. He was vaguely understood to have created men and women by calling them out of the reeds (animals existed before this, and so did Bushmen), but Bantu rarely thought much about him or entertained either hopes or fears that he would take any interest in the affairs of the world. No tribes had any special rites or practices devised to attract his notice and goodwill. Sometimes he was believed to appear in thunder and lightning and hail, and in times of drought they might appeal to him. He was a vague, distant first cause, not the active centre of the system. He certainly did not lay down any rules or moral code which people must obey.

Perhaps the belief in this supreme being was strongest amongst the Shona tribes in Southern Rhodesia, amongst whom there was a fairly strong system based on Mwari, or Mlimo. This spirit had priests who inhabited caves in the Matopo Hills. They answered questions, gave advice, and sometimes performed marvellous feats to

impress inquirers. The worship of Mlimo survived even when the Shona were conquered by the Amandebele, and his priests were very powerful in the time of Lobengula, the last Amandebele king. But it is not easy to say whether the Mlimo's priests had this power because the local tribes firmly believed in the existence of a powerful and active supreme being, or whether people believed in the supreme being because Mlimo happened to have a particularly clever and firmly established group of priests, who were assisted by various local factors. The Mlimo's priests bore some resemblance to the Druids who flourished in Britain before the Roman Conquest, though the Druids were far more learned.

Perhaps the chief reason why the Bantu normally cared very little about the supreme being was that they believed he must be approached through their ancestral spirits, who were therefore of far more immediate effect.

The Bantu religion may be defined as a very debased form of one that has been very common amongst primitive people and has existed in higher forms amongst the Chinese, Japanese, and the ancient Greeks and Romans—the worship of dead ancestors.

We have mentioned their view that the life of the race was continuous and that when individuals died their spirits could rise from the grave and take part again in this life's affairs. This, coupled with the not uncommon tendency to regard rocks, streams, woods, mountains, pools, caves, animals, and other lifeless or soulless things as possessing spirits, helped to people the little world of any Bantu family or village with a host of unseen friends and enemies. Even new-comers to a district were ready to believe that the ghosts of dead chiefs of the former inhabitants still haunted it. The night was full of what in the language of other countries would be called boggarts,

nymphs, dryads and gnomes, most of them evilly disposed. Round this spirit life was built a system of magic which pervaded the whole of their life, with its accompanying taboos and rigid customs. Taboos are very common amongst primitive people—in fact, rather more common amongst others than amongst the Bantu.

Some tribes seem to have thought that the spirits of the dead haunted their graves or took the forms of pythons, snakes, lizards, or of more majestic things. Others held that the spirits inhabited a dim world where life was rather like the life of ours, people retaining the rank and degree that they held in this, high or low as the case might be. Spirits kept their old natures and were as jealous and irritable as fathers of families ever were in real life, and easily roused to anger if a descendant did anything unworthy. This set of beliefs about the dead must have arisen from the intense reverence which the Bantu felt for age and seniority, which naturally was carried on to the after-life of old heroes and finally of all who died and left descendants. No one seems to have troubled much about the spirits of those who did not leave either children of their own or of their wife's by a marriage with another man of their family. Spirits were only concerned with their own families; they appeared in dreams, and sometimes came to warn against danger but oftener to reproach. If so, the person who fancied they had visited him had to go to a diviner for counsel.

Troubles and accidents might be due either to the evil works of sorcerers or to the displeasure of ancestors. Ancestral spirits might enter the minds of human beings and drive them to frenzy and prophecies. Sacrifices were regularly made to the spirits on all important occasions: a little beer was poured as a libation whenever beer was brewed; meat was sacrificed when a beast was slaughtered;

even water and snuff were treated in the same way. At weddings and birth-feasts bigger sacrifices might be made. If the diviner indicated that a family spirit was causing sickness, more sacrifices were required. In some parts there were heaps of stones on which passers-by dropped stones as a simple acknowledgement, and in some tribes the people would throw a stone into a river before trying to cross it, to remind their ancestors to help them. Children were expected to visit the graves of their parents and grandparents as soon as possible after their deaths and to come again annually, making sacrifices according to the rank of the dead.

Needless to say, though all ancestors were supposedly equally active after death, people forgot those whom they had never known. They often remembered them by name, but after a few generations it was unlikely that any one would be visited by visions of them. The spirits of the chief's ancestors were remembered longer and regarded as active forces to whom the tribe might owe good or bad fortune. Part of the chief's authority came from his being the channel of communication between them and the tribe, and from the fact that he became one of them after his death. The Bavenda even regarded their chiefs as gods during their lifetimes.

Amongst his other functions, the chief was head magician of the tribe. Magical rites were performed on his accession to the chieftainship; these were important because it was at these moments, when one chief died and another succeeded, that the tribe was most in need of being held together. He had, or at least was believed to have, magic medicines which would ensure him success in his undertakings.

The chief spoke on the tribe's behalf to his ancestors, kept relics of them which were supposed to have magical

powers, offered sacrifices to them on all important occasions, and was believed to have great powers as a rainmaker. His efforts to make rain took various forms: the sacrifice of special game and of oxen and black bulls; scattering medicated water and putting himself into a violent sweat, which was supposed to bring on rain—this is what is known as 'sympathetic magic'. Sometimes, though only in desperate cases of drought or famine, human beings were slain to please the spirits. Even members of the chief's own family might be, if accused of causing drought through their errors. Rain-making, whether performed by the chief or a diviner, simply meant a little skill in recognizing weather signs, and a good deal of luck.

Drought was such a deadly and ruinous thing to a Bantu family that extraordinary things were done to avert it. For instance, the rule that they must kill twins and children who cut the upper teeth first was enforced under the (obviously silly) belief that if they were not drowned and buried in wet earth, drought would follow. One is tempted to ask why people ever believe such nonsense and went on believing it so long. The answer seems to be that the violent climate of Africa, in which terrible things were always happening without reason or warning, drove people to invent or accept all kinds of absurd explanations of sudden illnesses and accidents. Having once accepted these explanations, the intense conservatism of the Bantu and their distance from outside influences made them part and parcel of the racial life. They were not deep thinkers and did not trouble much to make up their own minds about what they really believed or what could be possible. After all, it was the only system they had ever heard of, and how could they possibly imagine another. It was sometimes held that drought was due to the wicked

activities of sorcerers and then a hunt for them took place. Any one who was accused was almost certainly slain—the least sign of anything different from the ordinary in the house, possessions, appearance, or behaviour of some unpopular person would be enough to justify an accusation.

This brings us to the witch-doctor, a name which covered two different kinds of specialist: the diviners, or *izinyanga*, *izanusu*, or *dingaka*, and the herbalists. It was possible for a man to be both, and all diviners were herbalists, but not all herbalists were diviners. Probably no word connected with the Bantu race arouses such images of horror as does this word 'witch-doctor'. To the European mind it evokes the picture of a lean and horrible old man, in monkey-skin cap, catskin kilt, and belt hung with dried bladders, his limbs bedecked with beads, charms, necklaces of human teeth, and grotesque amulets; at whose glance strong men shudder and children run away. This picture is not far from the truth as regards some of the diviners, but let us give the devil his due and describe them without exaggeration.

The craft of divining was usually hereditary; sons succeeded fathers and were trained by them. They also selected and trained promising boys. Amongst the Nguni, women could often be diviners, though they could not make sacrifices to the spirits. Many of these women started their careers by being possessed of harmless spirits, which was shown by their going away into the bush and fasting for long periods, seeing visions and raving about them with all the signs of frenzy. This was followed by a long period of training in the technique of divining.

In all tribes a fully qualified diviner-herbalist had to be acquainted with some or all of these things: he must know a large number of recipes for medicine—infusions,



decoctions, ointments, poultices, often prepared from disgusting ingredients, as such things usually were in European countries until three centuries ago. A few of them had a certain amount of value. He must learn how to bleed people, this remedy, too, being one which survived in Europe until modern times. He also learnt a large amount of meaningless patter which he mumbled over the patient during diagnosis and treatment. He then had to become perfectly familiar with the tribal rites for all occasions and the proper methods of purification to be used after crime or contact with death or any kind of uncleanness or infringement of a taboo. With this went the rules about sacrifices to be made during these rites, an intimate knowledge of ritual dances, and a knowledge of the magical properties of certain bones, shells, stones, and other objects, and of the interpretation of dreams or visions.

Above all, he learnt how to read expression and behaviour, and how to deduce the thoughts of his audience, patients, or accused persons from slight changes in countenance. So far as the diviner's operations were not pure humbug or clever guess-work, they were based on this skill in mind-reading. Some diviners were 'shrewd, widely-travelled, observing men, gifted with a profound knowledge of character and a useful insight into human nature'. Remembering that all the other tricks of the trade had the effect of working the spectators into a highly emotional frame of mind, it is possible to see how a clever diviner could sometimes arrive at true conclusions about their previous actions, in spite of the absence of all other evidence.

Cases of simple sickness were often treated by diviners, and the diviner, if he did not accuse any one of causing the sickness by sorcery, would endeavour to drive out

the spirit that was troubling the patient. Women were usually sent back to their parents' kraal when ill, their ancestral spirits being held responsible.

If, say, a child was ill, its parents would visit a distant diviner, or several diviners in turn, till one of them hit on some remark which they accepted as evidence that he understood the case. People preferred to visit diviners who lived some miles away, to make sure that they did not know all about the case beforehand. The diviner might end by announcing that a family spirit was troubling the child and must be persuaded by sacrifices to leave it. The parents would choose a day, brew beer and summon their kinsfolk together. On the chosen day an ox would be got ready for sacrifice and the father would address the departed spirits thus: "Father! This is your meat. We beseech you to speak to your father that he may speak to his father, and he again to his father, right away to the old, old fathers, whose names we do not now know. We pray to be saved from all the sicknesses that are abroad to-day." Meanwhile he would throw a handful of grain at the ox and if it shook itself and trembled, the family believed that the spirits were listening. The ox would be killed, the meat cooked and eaten, and the beer drunk, so that the departed spirits, though no longer able to eat and drink, would be gratified by seeing their descendants do so. Probably the eating and drinking would become a fairly wild orgy, unless the illness was desperately urgent. These occasions were the strongest bond of family life. Finally, the father would get medicines from a herbalist recommended by the diviner.<sup>1</sup>

Small cases of theft or of missing property might also be settled by calling in the diviner. This practice survived in England until less than a century ago.

<sup>1</sup> P. Nielsen, *The Colour Bar* (Juta, Cape Town).

However repulsive some of the diviner's methods and decisions might be, the system did apparently lead to the cleverest people in the tribe possessing power. Not only private crimes and sickness, but matters of public policy such as war and peace might be referred to them; they arrived at an opinion after sacrificing animals and examining the entrails. Usually they knew fairly well what they meant to say and arranged the evidence accordingly. This practice was used in ancient Rome. There were instances where diviners made remarkably bad mistakes, as in the famous 'cattle-killing' of the Xosa in 1857, but in a crude way, probably, they did act as a force tending towards order and a sensible policy. Unfortunately, they almost always upheld old customs and institutions and attacked any attempt at change.

To a great extent, the Bantu undoubtedly believed in the powers of the diviners, and even when they had good reason for disbelief they seem to have argued that people always had relied on diviners, that there must therefore be something in it, and that they could do themselves no harm by following the ancient ways and might do themselves and their families very serious harm by departing from them. The number of people in each generation of a sceptical attitude of mind was steadily reduced by sorcery prosecutions. Very few people of any race have much capacity for reasoning about such things, and still fewer have the courage to act on the conclusions that they form privately.

Many customs and beliefs were maintained, not by killing people who rebelled against them, but by milder means. Promotion and honour within the tribe were reserved for those who obeyed the ruling ideas closely, and those who denied them were loaded with contempt and ridicule. Bantu, like most Europeans, hate being

laughed at, and it was never easy for a man to defy the ridicule of all his friends and neighbours, even if he happened to be right and they wrong.

The Bantu thought that almost all unusual and unfortunate events were caused by magic, even if a man or beast was struck by lightning or a kraal raided by a leopard. All magic was not of a bad kind—there was good magic, employed for beneficial or curative purposes—but there was much black magic, which people employed deliberately, either from their own knowledge or with the help of a diviner, to harm other people. The general principle was that if you got some part of your enemy's body and flesh into your possession, e.g. parings from his finger nails, it gave you the power to inflict harm on him by subjecting them to various kinds of treatment. Undoubtedly many people tried to do this, and although their efforts may not have had any effect on their enemies, they fully thought they were doing wrong. It was possible too to obtain drugs and prescriptions which would cause evil spirits to enter an enemy's body—not ancestral spirits in this case—and poisons were often employed. As a rule, attempts at sorcery, and false charges of sorcery, were made after some more or less natural quarrel had begun.

People who used these methods were sorcerers in the true sense. There was supposed to be another class of evil-doers, who might be more correctly termed wizards or witches. These were people into whom evil spirits entered, causing them to prowl round at night in the form of wild beasts and vent their rage on anything human or animal they could get at. People so afflicted, if treatment by the diviner were of no avail, might properly be slain, and would not consider themselves unjustly treated. Needless to say, the number of people in any way subject to 'possessions' was very small, but here, as in all countries,

people accused often admitted their guilt. As the wizard was supposed to be unconscious of being possessed by the evil spirit, he obviously could not deny at all confidently that it had happened. Most tribes did not differentiate between sorcerers and wizards. Medicines were used to keep kraals safe against wizards; if they failed, the presumption was that the sorcerer had stronger ones or that the spirits were particularly vindictive.

The herbalists who did not practise as diviners were merely doctors of a very low standard. They knew the various receipts and patter which we mentioned as being part of the full diviner's equipment. Some herbalists specialized for instance in the treatment of sores. They knew nothing of physiology and the mechanism of the body, and thought that the internal organs could move about inside. Pain of any kind was usually put down to the existence inside the patient's body of a venomous insect or reptile, and they sometimes performed conjuring tricks and triumphantly produced something which was alleged to be a small snake that had been giving the patient trouble. Even Europeans are not always successful in connecting cause and effect in illness, and Bantu were much less so.

Although only a small proportion of the herbalists' prescriptions were of much value, they probably cured many illnesses merely by making the patient believe he had had good medicine. It is generally admitted that a certain amount of the medical treatment which Europeans undergo to-day has no effect, or very little, except that it gives the patient a feeling of confidence. With a race like the Bantu, who were healthy but prone to give up hope if they thought the spirits were against them, this feeling of confidence was really useful and valuable.

By modern standards, Bantu religion and medical

science were pitiful if not repellent. But we must bear in mind that until 300 years ago, a very short time in human development, there was nothing much to choose between Bantu and Europeans as regards their belief in witchcraft and their ideas of medicine. King James I or Francis Bacon would not have scoffed at diviners or ridiculed the possibility of sorcery, and it is doubtful whether the average doctor and surgeon of their times knew very much more about the functions of the body or the cure for its ills than the average Bantu herbalist. But while the Bantu remained stationary until about fifty years ago, Europe was making colossal progress. Gradually the old forms of ignorance and superstition were liquidated. At any point during the social history of Europe in the last 300 years we can see them weakening. In the more advanced countries superstition survives only in 'transformed and sublimated' forms.

Besides the ancestral and local spirits there were others, of whom the most famous was a mysterious being called Thikoloshe. He was found in all sorts of places, and people were often firmly convinced they had seen him. He was supposed to be a dwarf about 2 feet high with very odd limbs and features and he was full of diabolical tricks. Thikoloshe had many parallels in the ideas of European peasants not very long ago, though few of these parallels were so evil in all their ways.

We come now to beliefs which were encouraged and enforced by the diviners, but which did not require their active presence. These included a large number of taboos—things that could not be done. To take two, in some tribes a man might not drink milk in any village from which it would be lawful for him to take a wife. In some, for a year after marrying a wife, a man might not eat honey with her. There were a large number of similar

prohibitions, about the origins of which we can only guess. They may have begun as rules which were meant to serve a real purpose and have been kept in force after conditions had changed, or after they had been misunderstood. It was wrong to put the food first into the men's bowls at meals, because the stick with which it was stirred was like a spear and they might be wounded by a spear afterwards—pure nonsense, but perhaps originally aimed at seeing that the women got a fair share of the food. It is possible, too, that clever diviners thought it good for people to obey rules which had no rhyme or reason, along with others for which reasons existed, to keep them from hoping to find reasons for things and so drifting into the deplorable habit of independent thought.

The Shona tribes disliked mentioning crocodiles, which was only natural, and went to the length of thinking that rivers might dry up and no rain come if white men shot the brutes. Women should never see a dying man, nor should they or children see a dead body when it was brought out of a hut for burial. Women must not eat guinea-fowl or their children would squint. Women must not join in hunting, nor must the names of the animals be spoken, nor must the man who killed the game allow it to see him—this meant that men must hunt in couples, so that a different one might finish off a wounded buck. A man making a drum must make it secretly, and must not look into the bottom of the drum. There were many beliefs about omens—signs foreboding good or ill luck: for instance, a man going out from his kraal and meeting a chameleon, a snake, a tortoise, or a mole would be downcast, whereas an armadillo, hornbill, badger, red hare, or flamingo would cheer him up. Baboons were believed to be careful mothers; so for this reason the skins of female baboons were sometimes used to carry

babies in. Similar superstitions grow up everywhere amongst human beings.

Two or three of the best known taboos are those connected with tribal totems and the rules against allowing twins to live. Totemism was not found in all tribes: those which made their way furthest to the south seem to have forgotten it as they went, but it remained active amongst the more stationary tribes of the Chwana and Shona countries. There were no religious ceremonies connected with totemism, but clans and tribes who had totems were forbidden to kill their totem animal, and regarded it with awe and interest. The whole system of totem beliefs seems to us quite pointless, but it may have begun as a rather indirect means of reminding men that they must not marry near relations—the exact line of argument does not matter here.

The various cruel customs connected with twins and children who cut the upper teeth first are well known. They may have begun in the belief that such children would not grow up healthy; in fact, a certain number of Bantu customs in regard to small babies seem to be unconscious attempts to allow only the healthy to survive in a world where weaklings would not be much use to themselves or the family. It must not for a moment be thought that the Bantu were deliberately cruel or callous towards tiny children. On the contrary, their intense fondness for children, particularly their own, but in a lesser degree for any one else's, is one of the strongest features of their character. Men desired sons for the supernatural reasons that we mentioned before, but women simply loved their children with passionate and unreasoning affection, like mothers of other races. If Bantu women could be brought to put their babies to death, it could only be under the compulsion of a belief



so strong that nothing in modern European life can give us much experience of it, and the strength of this particular belief gives us a standard by which we can judge the strength of other beliefs, equally unreasonable though less cruel.

Two different views may reasonably be held about the general effect of Bantu customs and superstitions. It may be argued that the belief in magic and divination gave confidence to those who did as they were told, and enabled them to fight, hunt, and go through their very perilous daily life more successfully than they would have done without it. As they would in any case have believed in spirits and omens—primitive races invariably do—it was as well that they should believe that evil could be counter-acted. It has been said that 'Bantu magic was by no means the gross empty superstition it is so often held to have been. It did not take the place of rational thought and hard work, but was supplementary to them; it was employed only in times of stress and anxiety when the native's experience and practical control of his environment failed him; and it served directly to provide emotional relief and comfort when they were most needed. The methods employed may have been crude and inadequate, but by giving hope and confidence they enabled the people to tide safely over the gaps in their knowledge and to look forward bravely to the future'.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand the fear of sorcery caused untold suspicion and hatred in tribal life. No one was ever sure that his neighbours were not setting spells on him or working him harm under possession by evil spirits. Perhaps human nature demands outlets, and the Bantu found in the morbid excitement of sorcery prosecutions

<sup>1</sup> Schapera, *Western Civilization and the Natives of South Africa* (Routledge).

an outlet for the emotions which civilized people satisfy in brooding over murder trials.

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Some general comments on Bantu life and character may be made here, though they are not associated with magic.

It may be thought that women had a very lowly place in the estimation of the Bantu. It is, however, almost certain that the status of Bantu women was as high as that which European women enjoyed (or suffered) until comparatively recent times. The Bantu woman did not benefit by ideas of chivalry, such as those which flourished in Europe, though honoured more in the breach than the observance. But although a husband might beat his wife, and though women certainly had plenty of hard work to do, they were able to look after themselves, and in the hard conditions which all Bantu had to endure, they seem to have known that they were at any rate well provided for, either by their fathers and brothers or by their husbands and sons. In fact, the average Bantu woman was *relatively* better off than the average European woman. Bantu women have never been regarded by Europeans with either as much respect or as much acute dislike as their menfolk have often inspired. They are now, and perhaps always have been, the most unprogressive part of the Bantu race and the chief obstacles to change, good or bad.

The Bantu did not much respect wealth. Courage, hospitality, wisdom, and similar qualities earned their admiration. This was a commendable feature in their outlook, and one in which they compared very favourably with modern Europeans and Americans.

The general tendency of Bantu morality was not

dissimilar from that generally accepted amongst civilized people, except that it grew rapidly weaker when one travelled further from the wide circle of the family. Within the family, the Bantu were on the whole much less selfish and callous than other races. They were, in many ways, very honest. Lying, it is true, was not regarded as a vice by them, any more than by the ancient Spartans; in a cruel continent such as Africa the all-important aim was the preservation of oneself and one's family, which over-rode subtler ideals such as truth-telling. A habit of stealing other people's cattle was not uncommon, but this was regarded more as a game and a point of honour than as a form of profit-making. In this respect there was little to choose between them and the Scottish Highlanders of three centuries ago.

Though the Bantu could endure greater physical privation than most Europeans, they were not so tenacious of life. The European point of view was summed up, a great while before the aboriginal tribes of Europe had given the matter such thought, in the words of the Hebrew writer: 'Skin for skin, all that a man hath will he give for his life.' To the Bantu man, however, mere life did not count for so much. Not only in the heat of battle or in combat with a wild beast, or in the mad excitement of a sorcery trial, but in everyday life, they were less concerned than Europeans as to whether they lived or died. Their average life was certainly much shorter than that of modern Europeans. They were usually old by forty-five. Women especially grew old quickly. Old people who had outlived their strength died in a matter-of-fact way, often going quietly into the veld to wait for death, and suicide was not uncommon amongst younger people. There was no actual encouragement of suicide as in the religious ideas of the civilized Japanese, but if overcome

by depression they would take their lives or throw them away more readily than a European. It is hardly safe to say whether this was a hereditary racial tendency or due to the monotony of life in Africa, which gave them few other interests to weigh against great grief and disappointment. Undoubtedly it must have been strengthened by the Bantu belief in the spirit world, which made it almost a matter of indifference to a man whether he were amongst the living or the dead.

Some Bantu tribes, if not all, have a tendency to confess things easily. European criminals will deny their guilt firmly after conviction, but Bantu, it is said, are rather given to 'making a clean breast' before it is, strictly speaking, necessary to do so. Presumably this, too, is due to the belief in unseen powers and to the same causes that made them admit guilt when accused by diviners, even when they were quite innocent.

Early travellers and other observers have noted the natural good manners of the Bantu. Some tribes were more easily tempted than others to be noisy and foolish, but the average Bantu of a good tribe carried himself erectly, behaved to strangers with polite reserve, talked slowly, and set great store by gravity and good deportment and the observance of elaborate rituals, without at the same time losing his essential cheerfulness and good humour. As we have said before, every man was expected to show respect to his elders, and he frequently was expected to address even strangers as 'father' or 'mother'. This agrees with the idea of a grave, conservative people.

European ideas of the Bantu have undoubtedly been affected by the circumstances of the time when Europeans first met them extensively. This was about 100 years ago, when conditions were such that the Bantu were unlikely to give a good impression. Tshaka's wars had

ruined and dispersed hundreds of prosperous tribes. The life they were leading was often wretched, and every man's hand was against his neighbours. We know little of things before Tshaka's time, but there does seem to be ground for the belief that until the wars of Dingiswayo and Tshaka, the ordinary Bantu south of the Zambesi had led a life which, all in all, might not unfairly be called Arcadian. At any rate, it was a life of greater stability, comfort and established tradition than that which the first European trekkers and hunters and missionaries found when they entered the country where the Zulu kings and their lesser rivals had done such harm. It is perhaps only fair to judge the Bantu system by its results before that great upheaval than after. The coming of Europeans improved the condition of the Bantu in some ways and depressed it in others. Since those days, Europeans have seldom seen the Bantu living in anything but squalor, whether it was the barbarism to which Tshaka had reduced them or the slum life of industrialized Bantu in great cities during the South African Industrial Revolution of the last half-century.

'Bantu life in the past was at times no doubt savage and harsh. The horrors of witchcraft and ritual infanticide, the constraining fear of the spirits, the cramping insistence on the hierarchy of age and tribal seniority, the occasional tyranny of a chief, and the possible destruction of life and property through ruthless warfare or irresistible famine did not always make for happiness. But to the average man, as long as things went well, life was far from unpleasant. Feasting with his companions or debating with keen interest the finer points of a lawsuit, taking part in the many ceremonies and dances which lent so much colour to his life, listening with pride to the glorification of his chief, or himself fondly reciting the doings of his

ancestors, excitedly going out to war or the chase, and best of all coming back to his home at sunset with his beloved cattle lowing all round him, or sitting contentedly by the fire while near by some old woman entertained his children with one of the many folk tales so abundant in the lore of his people, he might well feel that it was good to be alive.’<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Schapera, *Western Civilization and the Natives of South Africa* (Routledge).

## CHAPTER V

### FIRST CONTACTS OF BANTU AND EUROPEANS

**I**N the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Portuguese soldiers and missionaries played some part in the life of the Bantu tribes and kingdoms of the country now known as Southern Rhodesia, and they seem to have been allied with the chief known as Monomatapa. Nothing came of this, and for most purposes we may say that European influence on the Bantu began about a century ago at the time of the Great Trek.

In most parts of the continent of Africa, the first European to be seen by the tribes was either a missionary who had come there for their good or a hunter or explorer, who was often a man of means with no object in view except discovery and adventure. With men like this the relations of the tribes were usually friendly. There were instances of chiefs who drove hard bargains for helping travellers who were in difficulties, and there were occasional murders. Usually, however, the Bantu were hospitable and helpful, much more so than we should expect them to have been, in view of their morbid fear of everything that was different from what they were used to. Traders followed close behind the missionaries and explorers, and they, too, for obvious reasons, kept on fairly good terms with the tribes, though they often became unpopular.

In many parts of Africa there have never been any Europeans except a few missionaries, traders, civil servants, soldiers, and police, with no desire to stay in the country permanently or to possess land there. On the whole they and the Bantu have been on good terms.

Their effect on Bantu life has been noticeable but not revolutionary. In South Africa, however, there has been European settlement on a very large scale, and a more complicated state of things has arisen. Everywhere from the Cape coast of the Eastern Province to the Zambesi, after a few years during which hunters and missionaries had the country to themselves, there have followed streams of European traders, farmers, miners, and others, whose object was to occupy land and stay there permanently. This has led to what has been perhaps the biggest social change through which any large group of people anywhere in the world has passed during the last century.

This European invasion of the Bantu country began on the eastern frontier of the old Cape Colony, where during the years from 1772 to 1836 the Boer cattle farmers spreading eastwards were dammed up against the barrier formed by the Xosa clans, which had oozed westwards as far as the Fish River. Cape Colony at the time of the Great Trek did not contain more than 10 per cent. as many European inhabitants as now, so there was hardly a shortage of land by modern standards, but the farmers were not farmers in the modern sense of the word; agriculture was a small side-line and they lived by hunting and by grazing herds and flocks, which were allowed to roam over large areas of veld. They regarded a farm of 6,000 acres as the proper area for one man to occupy, though some had more, and all had, in addition, a great deal of free grazing. It is well known that they regarded isolation as a good thing for its own sake, and felt uncomfortably crowded if another man's chimney smoke could be seen on the horizon. Their appetite for land was therefore capacious, while the Xosa were also constantly in need of fresh land as their numbers grew.



There was also constant friction between the two races and a certain amount of skirmishing on account of cattle thefts by the Xosa. Who was really responsible for the bloodshed that occurred cannot be said with as much certainty as has often been employed. The dangers which existed on the eastern frontier had little effect in keeping the trekking Boers from spreading right up to and across it, and undoubtedly the chief cause of the nine Xosa wars which occurred during the period from 1772 to 1877 was the European desire for land and the Xosa objection to giving it up. Had this land question not existed, there would have been much less difficulty in keeping some kind of neutral belt between the two races. But all attempts at preventing intercourse broke down because both sides and particularly the Europeans, who had more cattle, were always eating into the land on the other side of whatever boundary was fixed. Trouble usually broke out during bad droughts, when it became a matter of desperate urgency to find fresh grazing. The shortage of land for the trekking Boers became more acute after 1821, when the English settlers in the Albany district began to occupy large areas of the land which was already insufficient for their needs.

The final result of the Xosa wars was the breaking up of the Xosa nation and the annexation of their territory, some of which was permanently filled by European settlers. It is now the Ciskei and Transkei. But long before the date when this process was finished, the majority of the Eastern Province Boers had embarked on the Great Trek (1836-8). The feeling uppermost in their minds was a violent objection to the British Government's emancipation of the Hottentots (1828) and slaves (1834). Few of them had owned slaves, and fewer still of the first parties that trekked can have known that owners of slaves

would receive only half of the rather inflated prices at which slaves had been valued. But they considered the whole emancipation movement pernicious and unchristian, and this view was vividly reflected in their dealings with the Bantu afterwards. However, it appears to be the fact that a very strong underlying motive was the land question. No doubt they themselves forgot it in the heat of their indignation over the emancipation grievance, or were only half aware of it. Trekking plans were made as early as 1834. The Xosa war of 1834-5 delayed the Trek for a year or two, as there seemed to be a possibility that large areas of Xosaland would be confiscated and handed over to Europeans. D'Urban, the Governor, realized that only small areas could be so settled, many months before he received the famous dispatch from the Colonial Office which he wrongly interpreted as an order to evacuate the Xosa country immediately. As soon as D'Urban's decision had been made against extensive European settlement, parties of Boers began to trek northwards, in the only direction still open to migration. Although the English settlers in the Albany district were almost equally opposed to the British Government's policy towards the Hottentots, slaves, and Xosa, none of them trekked. It seems fairly certain that the economic factor made the Boers trek and the English stay where they were; the English were doing fairly well with their new farming methods, while the Boers simply could not compete with them for the land that was available, and could not live in their old way unless large fresh supplies of land could be obtained.

The next sixty years were full of wars and political crises, which generally ended with European settlement extended over a little or a great deal more of the country between Cape Town and the Zambesi. The general

effect was usually the occupation by European governments of any given area, and the annexation by them of the greater part of the land as large farms, while the tribal lands were reduced to reserves of a half or a quarter of what they had been—the proportion varied—and the Bantu, who had not had too much land even before Europeans took most of it, became servants and labourers in mines, on farms, in stores, and in houses.

There was never anything resembling a united war of Bantu tribes against the Dutch and English, though it was feared at one time in the 1870's. Practically all the wars were fought against one tribe or one small group at a time, all the others or even parts of the hostile tribe remaining neutral or actively helping the Europeans, as half of the Zulu, for instance, did when Dingaan was overthrown in 1840. Some tribes, like the Fingo and Bechuana, were almost always on the side of the Europeans. To-day there does not seem to be a great deal of difference in their feelings towards Europeans. One result of European employment and European transport has been to smooth out tribal feelings in the direction of a common Bantu feeling, but this process has not gone at all far yet.

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European civilization first came to the Bantu in simple forms like traders' goods and presents from hunters. Cloth, beads, knives, iron pots, *badzas*, blankets, and guns were given as wages or in payment for skins, gum, and elephants' tusks. Wonder at these goods and a strong desire to possess them were probably the first emotions that Europeans aroused in Bantu minds after the first shock of their extraordinary appearance had passed off. European goods soon became indispensable. But this quick recognition of the superior merits of European

knives and pots did not at first carry with it much desire to know or imitate Europeans as men. Although circumstances have changed since then, it is doubtful whether many Bantu have ever copied Europeans very willingly, or from other motives than fear of their power. A majority of Europeans certainly did nothing to earn Bantu goodwill and did not want it.

European goods in themselves would not have had a revolutionary influence on Bantu life. But before long, Europeans were living permanently amongst them, as missionaries, traders, or civil servants; farmers were settling close to their borders if not actually amongst them, and very soon the men of the tribes began to work for European wages. It was this which really brought European civilization as a force into their development, one which has grown increasingly strong ever since. Although no doubt there were always attractions in the idea of getting money and buying European goods, it is very doubtful whether many Bantu would ever have come into European employment save for the pressure of three factors, which were all at work from quite early times: (1) occasional famines, (2) permanent scarcity of land, which grew steadily worse, (3) need to earn money to pay taxes. Taxes were levied from an early date, sometimes, as later in the Glen Grey Act, with the intention of producing a supply of labour.

As early as the 1820's, Boers sometimes employed Xosa as cattle-herds instead of the Hottentots whom they had formerly employed. Refugee Mantatis also came in to escape starvation, and the employment of Bantu became common on the eastern frontier. Fairs were held every few months to trade with them, and travelling hawkers went into the Xosa country on the heels of missionaries. During the nineteenth century, especially before 1870,

there were several long periods of acute distress caused by severe droughts, locusts, and cattle sickness. Presumably this sort of trouble had always happened from time to time, but formerly tribes had usually been able to move to new land. Now they had first to sell or kill their cherished cattle, and then come to get work from Europeans for the small wages given in those days. Farmers could not have employed very many Bantu, but as early as 1850 merchants at Port Elizabeth were employing them to unload ships, and increasing numbers were needed as towns grew. Twenty years later, when the diamond mines and the first small gold mines were begun, the miners used Bantu labour from the start. The enormous mines developed at Kimberley and subsequently on the Rand were only made possible by the fact that this labour, which was very cheap and fairly good, was available. In some parts the Bantu were most unwilling to work in mines, which meant going down shafts into the earth, a process which they regarded with fear and horror. These feelings wore off gradually. Between 1870 and 1900 a great deal of railway construction was done, which required a very large amount of labour and accustomed many Bantu to European work. By the end of the century there was hardly a tribe of which some men at least were not regularly working for Europeans.

Gradually the Bantu who worked for Europeans came to stay longer and longer away from home, and the large new towns which grew up had each its population of Bantu. A number of them stayed permanently, and 'home' to them meant the slums of some European town or city. The rate at which they migrated to the towns was always roughly governed by the rate of shrinkage of the land available per head in their reserves, and grew faster after the formation of the Union.

Roughly speaking, we may say that whereas a century ago 98 per cent. of the Bantu south of the Zambesi had never seen a European, and most of them had never heard of such a person, to-day probably 98 per cent. of the Bantu men have seen Europeans, and most of them have worked for Europeans for long periods, either in or near a reserve or more commonly in a European town or village. European civilization has also been brought to them direct, to a limited extent, by schools, churches, irrigation works, magistracies, and other means. On the whole, European civilization, or the slightly modified form of it which flourishes in southern Africa, is now the chief moral, intellectual, and economic influence in the life of the Bantu. So far the women of the Bantu race have been affected less than the men, and this has slowed the rate of change, since the women of a race are always one of the chief influences on its culture. At present, with so many men always away from the reserves, the influence of the Bantu women on children is greater than it used to be.

At whatever rate European civilization spread, its extension was never to any great extent due to the deliberate efforts of Europeans. A few Europeans always did everything in their power to spread it—missionaries and a few officials. The great majority of Europeans were chiefly concerned to promote their own welfare, and if they traded with Bantu, employed them as servants, or in any other way Europeanized them, it was solely because they thought it advantageous to do so. From time to time most of them must have spared a few thoughts for the changes that the years would bring to pass, but it is fairly safe to say that most of them regarded the Bantu's acquisition of European culture, if only in the diluted form of cheap European clothes, with indifference

or with disapproval. However, so long as Europeans found Bantu labour to be essential to their comfort or profit in their mines, farms, houses, or shops, it was impossible to avoid transferring European habits and ideas to the Bantu, in a crude, superficial form.

The ideal system, from the point of view of many Europeans, would have been slavery, in which the labour would have been available and the Europeanizing process might in appearance have been checked. It is, however, clear from what happened in the United States before the Civil War that slavery will not prevent the Europeanization of a subject race. It hastens it, and slavery can in any case only be maintained if the ruling race deliberately sacrifices a large proportion of the comfort and prosperity, not to mention the moral welfare, which are the chief advantages that civilization confers on us. In other words, slavery would not have prevented the spread of European ideas and culture, and would have left the Europeans poorer and less happy than they have been. No doubt some of them would have thought the price was worth paying, but the majority, whether or not they ever reasoned the matter out, seem to have thought otherwise.

Similarly, the Bantu copied many European things without necessarily liking or envying Europeans much. They saw that European axes, hoes, and guns, or cars, bioscopes, and bicycles were desirable, and tried to get the use of them, but a deliberate and methodical attempt to Europeanize themselves cannot be traced. Even if they wore European clothes with apparent pride, they kept their tribal or at any rate their Bantu loyalties in their hearts. In a word, neither Europeans nor Bantu wanted Bantu to be Europeanized, but everything Europeans did was calculated to weaken the old Bantu system and force

the Bantu finally on to the only alternative, the European system and way of life.

The simplest way in which European civilization affected Bantu life was by preventing wars and inter-tribal raids. There were wars between Bantu and Europeans, and there were wars amongst Europeans themselves, from most of which Bantu were excluded, except from the biggest of them, the War of 1914-18, in which it has been estimated that more Bantu lost their lives than in the whole of Tshaka's wars. Most of these men were not from south of the Zambesi but from Tanganyika and Nyasaland. Despite these wars and inter-tribal riots in mine compounds and town slums, peace has been one of the chief results of the European occupation of southern Africa. Partly because of this, there has been an increase in the Bantu population. Owing to the very heavy infant death-rate, Bantu do not multiply as fast as Europeans do even without immigration from Europe. It is difficult to mention anything else which has affected all parts of southern Africa uniformly.

To-day we have at one end of the scale a few Bantu who have taken degrees in law, arts, or medicine, and at the other a few small tribes like the Wadoma of the Zambesi Valley who may have seen Europeans, but are said to have carefully avoided being seen themselves. Between them are a large number of gradations, the numbers being thickest round a sort of average type—a man who was born in a reserve or protectorate, but has worked for years on a mine or farm or in a town, is accustomed to life in town slums, wears clothes of European style, is used to travelling in trains, and can read and write a letter.

We saw that Bantu law was based on the family and that the family was a far stronger unit than it is amongst



Europeans. The tribe was a kind of magnified family, and there was a strong tradition of collective responsibility for crimes and mutual assistance in trouble, while justice consisted of a mixture of male public opinion with cast-iron inherited customs. The same attitude appeared in religion. But European law is based on the idea of individual responsibility, and European business sees nothing unnatural in cynical remarks such as 'Heaven helps those who help themselves'. European religion is in theory Christian, and individual salvation is the root idea of Christianity. 'No man may deliver his brother nor make agreement unto God for him.' Perhaps the commonest idea of right behaviour amongst democratic Europeans is respect for other people's private rights, property, and opinions, which is completely at variance with the Bantu outlook.

The chief characteristic which distinguishes Europeans from other races is their willingness to break with the past; it has grown more and more noticeable during recent centuries, and to-day, under the influence of the large section of the 'European' race which is settled in North America, it is becoming almost an accepted idea that anything old or even not quite brand-new is naturally inferior. In South Africa we see a mixture amongst Europeans of a comparatively conservative and a comparatively modern outlook, but on the whole the modern, Americanized outlook is gaining ground. Lingering traces of a primitive respect for the spirits of ancestors, a tendency to regard all new things as sorcery, and a fear of making any change from immemorial custom can sometimes be observed working on Europeans, but they are a very dim reflection of the force that such beliefs exerted in Bantu life, and they are steadily fading out.

The process through which the Bantu have passed in

the last century is in some respects parallel to two long, slow processes which in the course of centuries were worked out in the British Isles—the English conquest of Ireland, and the drift of the English peasant into modern life and finally into the towns. Any study of past phases of social life—for instance, the old Wessex life described in Thomas Hardy's novels and tales—reminds one faintly of much that we have noted in the transformation of the Bantu.

## CHAPTER VI

### BANTU RESERVES IN THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

UP to the first half of the nineteenth century, European control of southern Africa was confined to a portion of the present Cape Province. From about 1830, however, when the Voortrekkers began to move northwards, European control of the land extended rapidly; with this land control there inevitably went political control. Sometimes by war and conquest and sometimes by occupation without actual war, the Europeans had, by 1854, gained control of the present Natal, Orange Free State, and Transvaal. This still left the territory between the Cape border and Natal, Basutoland, Swaziland, Zululand, Bechuanaland, and the two Rhodesias occupied and ruled by Bantu tribes. But during the course of the next fifty years all these areas passed under European government.

While this process was going on, Europeans and Bantu came into contact with each other as foreigners and fought each other at various times over the question of land. Both Europeans and Bantu were farmers, and largely stock-farmers at that, and both sides were continually seeking fresh grazing lands for their large herds of cattle. Whatever minor causes there may have been for the many Bantu-European wars the desire for land was the fundamental cause. Sometimes it was land for pasture and cultivation; sometimes it was land for minerals; but always it was land. In these wars the Europeans sometimes suffered temporary defeat, but in the end their superior weapons and organization always gave them the victory. After victory came annexation and this was

followed by one of two things. In a few cases, as in Basutoland and in the present-day Native Reserves, the conquered Bantu were left in possession of a part of the conquered territory. In most cases, however, something like the Enclosure Movement in England took place and the land was occupied and, later, enclosed by Europeans, while the Bantu lost their ancient rights of occupation. In the same way that the change from the domestic system to the factory system in England deprived the hand-worker of direct access to his tools, so the conquest of the Bantu deprived large numbers of them of direct access to the land on which, in the past, they had been accustomed to make a living.

As long as the Bantu were independent of European control and had sufficient land for their wants, they did not, as a rule, work for the Europeans. But as soon as the tribes came under European rule and as soon as the Europeans settled down to regular agriculture the process began by which the Bantu have become the main labour force of the country. With European settlement came the establishment of villages and market towns and, after the discovery of diamonds in 1868 and gold in 1886, of large mining centres. With the economic expansion that followed the discovery of diamonds and gold the Bantu became more and more important in the economic life of the country. At first they were not anxious to leave their own agricultural pursuits to work for cash wages; but various factors combined to draw them from their own areas to European centres of life. In the first place, European occupation had left them insufficient land for their primitive and wasteful methods of farming and the law now prevented them from doing what they had been accustomed to do when they found their land insufficient—trekking to new land. As their population increased,

therefore, many of them were forced to seek a livelihood as labourers for the Europeans. Also, as the demand for Bantu labour for the farms and the mines increased the Government introduced money taxes for the Bantu in order to compel them to look for cash wages among the Europeans. Recruiting corporations sent agents among the Bantu tribes who offered wages on the mines that were sufficiently attractive to the young men of overpopulated areas. Finally, European civilization brought manufactured goods that could be bought for money and the desire for these goods spurred the Bantu to earn the money by working for the Europeans.

For many years the Bantu men and women who went to earn money working in the towns, on the farms, and on the mines looked on this as a purely temporary occupation. Their real roots were in their own country and, when they had earned enough cash to pay their taxes, to buy some of the European goods that attracted them, or to buy cattle for *lobola*,<sup>1</sup> they would return to their ancestral homes. This helps to explain why the Bantu have always been prepared to work for such low wages. The cash wages were just an extra and not the real means of subsistence. For the last thirty or forty years, however, the tendency has been for more and more Bantu to settle permanently in the European towns. The old reasons, mentioned above, are still at work drawing the Bantu into European economic life; but there are new forces that attract them to the towns. Now they want education for their children and find it better provided for in the towns than in their own areas or on the European farms; the younger people especially like the life in the towns, where they find social amenities; finally, they get better wages in towns.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 49.

We must realize, then, that it is only in the last fifty or sixty years, since about 1880, that the Bantu have come in large numbers to live among the Europeans.<sup>1</sup> During these years they have contributed very largely to the economic growth of the country. It was their labour, combined with the engineering skill of the Europeans, that built the railways, made the roads, worked the mines, and established the industries; it is their labour, under the direction of the European farmer, that has established the agricultural industry of South Africa. To-day the Bantu workman is a permanent feature of mining, farming, transport, and other industries. In the towns Bantu men and women perform most of the unskilled and domestic labour of the country and it is difficult to imagine what South Africa would be like without them.

From the time when the Europeans first began to annex Bantu land and thus to gain political control over the Bantu it has always been their aim to separate the two races as far as possible. In the towns we find separate European and Bantu townships; on the farms the Bantu 'huts' are usually a good distance away from the European dwelling. On a national scale, this separation takes the form of Reserves, where the Bantu alone may own land, and European areas, where they may work but may not own land. Economic forces have been too strong for a policy of complete separation. The Europeans continue to need the labour of the Bantu on the farms and on the mines, and as long as this is so complete separation is obviously impossible. In 1913 the Union Government tried to fix by law the areas where only Bantu and those where only Europeans might own land. By this time a very large proportion of the area of the Union was

<sup>1</sup> Bantu were employed before this, in large numbers, in the harbours.

occupied and owned by Europeans and the Government realized that it would have to buy back land in order to give the Bantu who were not working in European areas enough land to live on. Various Government commissions tried to demarcate more land for Bantu occupation, but they met with so much opposition from the Europeans that they failed. In 1936 Parliament passed a new Act dealing with the allocation of land. This Act is very important and will be described in detail later. At this stage it is not necessary to know the details of the Act to understand that, in general terms, European policy is to allow as many Bantu as are necessary for the labour requirements of the Europeans to live in European areas, but not to have ownership rights there; the rest of the Bantu must live in the Reserves.<sup>1</sup>

The following figures, taken from the census of 1936, will give us a mental picture of the distribution of population in the Union:

Bantu in Native Reserves	.	.	.	3,226,033
Bantu in European towns	.	.	.	1,149,228
Bantu on European farms	.	.	.	2,221,980

For the Europeans the figures are as follows:

Europeans in towns	.	.	.	1,307,285
Europeans on farms	.	.	.	696,227

Finally, the amounts of land available for Europeans and for Bantu occupation are:

*European:* 415,000 square miles (approx.), or about 87 per cent. of the total.

*Bantu:* 58,000 square miles (approx.), or about 13 per cent. of the total.

N.B.—This figure includes the land recently made available for Bantu occupation by the Native Land Act of 1936.

<sup>1</sup> The rights of a small number of Bantu, who had previously acquired land in European areas, are for the present undisturbed.

For convenience sake, the description that follows will deal with each group—Reserves, rural areas, towns—separately; and, in the case of the towns, a distinction will be made between the Bantu in towns and the Bantu on the mines. While it is convenient to divide the subject up in this way it must never be forgotten that there is a constant coming and going between the Native Reserves, the towns, the farms, and the mines, and that the conditions in each are constantly influencing and modifying the conditions in the others. It must not be thought that the population in these different areas is static either in number or in culture or in personnel. The mental picture at the next census will be different from the one given above.

So far we have spoken about the Bantu as if we referred to one single nation. As soon as we begin to analyse the situation, we find that there are many different Bantu tribes speaking different languages and with different customs. There are, in fact, hundreds of different tribes in the Union and, from the point of view of similarity of language and customs and history, these are usually divided into certain major groups. There is, first, the Nguni group, which comprises hundreds of tribes living in the Reserves between the Drakensberg escarpment and the sea, in the Cape Province, Natal, and the Transvaal. Then there is the Sotho group, which includes the Bantu in Basutoland and those living in Reserves in the Western and part of the Northern Transvaal. Then there are the tribes belonging to the Shangana-Tonga group, which are found mostly in the north-eastern Transvaal. A less numerous group is the Venda, who live mostly in the Zoutpansberg; and a still smaller group is the Lemba, but this is numerically unimportant.



The great mass of the Native Reserves of the Union lie in a broad strip between East London and Durban; north of that strip lie the substantial Reserves of Natal and Zululand; in the Transvaal there are scattered Reserves north of Johannesburg; in the Orange Free State there are three small Reserves; and, finally, in British Bechuanaland there are scattered Reserves.<sup>1</sup> Practically all the additional land which the Government is now making available for Bantu occupation is adjacent to the existing Reserves.

The vast majority of the Bantu living in the Reserves are farmers. When the Europeans first came into contact with them the Bantu practised a primitive subsistence economy; that means that they produced enough to supply their own very elementary wants and had no surplus for exchange. Money did not enter into their lives. Although the first Europeans with whom the Bantu had dealings did not use money very much themselves, they represented a civilization that had long since reached the stage of a money economy and, especially after the discovery of minerals, the Bantu began to come under the influence of this money economy. Contact with European civilization and administration created wants that could be satisfied by money only, and the Bantu had to sell something to get money. Living at a subsistence level, the only thing they could sell was their labour and, as we saw above, that is why we find them to-day on the mines and in the towns and on the farms. Most of the Bantu living in the Reserves to-day still largely practise subsistence economy. Except in some parts of the Transkei, the land is held communally by the tribe and the chief allocates land for cultivation to the individual members of

<sup>1</sup> British Bechuanaland is a part of the Cape Province and should be distinguished from the Bechuanaland Protectorate.

the tribe. The grazing land is common to all the individual stock-owners. There is practically no fencing and, indeed, where land is communally held, fencing would be a difficult matter. The kind of agriculture is, with few exceptions, primitive. The soil is scratched rather than ploughed; there is no rotation of crops; inferior seed is used; there is little fertilization of the soil; the ground is not properly prepared or cleared; weeding is done infrequently. In many parts the soil is 'doctored' magically before sowing and this is apt to take the place of more scientific farming. (Similar customs were formerly very common in Europe, and traces of them are found in many countries to-day.) As a general rule, the chiefs are ignorant and unprogressive and, through jealousy of any individual member of the tribe who may farm more progressively, do their best to prevent him from becoming too successful. The chief holds a special position in Bantu belief. He is really a link between the living tribe and their ancestors and is supposed by the primitive Bantu to have special magical powers. When ploughing takes place the chief's land must be ploughed first and harvesting may not be begun until the chief has given the sign.

The principal crops in the Reserves are maize and kaffir corn, and subsidiary crops are beans, pumpkins, ground-nuts, and sweet potatoes. In most of the Reserves maize is the chief daily food and kaffir corn is used more for making beer than as a staple food. The possession of cattle is, to the Bantu farmer, the real sign of wealth and social position. Cattle have a very important religious meaning for the Bantu, since they are supposed to be a link between the living and the dead. In ancestor worship cattle are sacrificed to appease the spirits of the dead. In the *lobola*, or marriage dowry system, and in marriage ceremonies, cattle play a special part. It is quite possible

that, in the dim past, cattle attained a religious value because of their economic value, but to-day the Bantu do not regard their cattle primarily as an economic possession. They use oxen for a little ploughing, but they seldom slaughter them except for ceremonial purposes; they want plenty of cattle rather than a few good head of cattle. This produces what is perhaps the worst feature of the Reserves, overstocking. Overstocking and the absence of fencing are responsible for the impoverishment of the soil and for erosion. In many parts of the Reserves desert conditions are being created.

This kind of primitive subsistence economy is very wasteful. The waste was not a serious problem so long as there was plenty of land; but European annexation, while depriving the Bantu of much of their former land, put a stop to tribal warfare and thus helped the population of man and beast to increase steadily. To-day bad agricultural methods and overstocking have reduced the carrying capacity of the Reserves to a dangerously low point. The Department of Native Affairs is doing something to improve conditions. Agricultural schools have been established and Bantu agricultural demonstrators travel about and try to persuade the people to improve their methods of farming and of stock-breeding. There are many difficulties in the way, however, such as the conservative nature of all farmers and especially of the primitive and superstitious Bantu farmer, the special beliefs about cattle, the communal ownership that makes fencing wellnigh impossible, and the absence of money. In some of the more progressive Reserves, credit societies have been started and agricultural shows are organized. A recent Government commission has recommended that a meat-canning factory should be set up in the Transkei to encourage the Bantu farmers to sell more stock and so

reduce the load that the soil is expected to carry. The Reserves are really too poor to help themselves and much will have to be done by the Union Government to prevent them from deteriorating and the inhabitants from becoming poorer than they are. Continued impoverishment will be bad for the whole country, and South Africa cannot afford to let large tracts of country become denuded or to have a larger number of landless inhabitants.

In some parts of the Transkei, individual tenure is allowed under what is known as the Glen Grey System, and each man may buy about 4 morgen<sup>1</sup> of land. Here conditions are slightly better. But these plots are too small for progressive farming and the occupiers are too poor to be able to fence properly. Also, so little land has actually been surveyed that thousands of Bantu want plots and cannot get them.

Agricultural labour in the Reserves is performed by men and women. Before the Europeans came, Bantu men were responsible for defending the tribe in war, for building the huts, for hunting, and for looking after the cattle; the women looked after the children and the house, and attended to the cultivation of the fields. To-day the men may not make war and there is practically no hunting. Also, the Europeans have introduced the Bantu to ox-drawn ploughs which the women cannot properly manage, and the men must go to the European centres to earn money for taxes and for other necessities. The result is that young boys look after the cattle, growing boys of fifteen and sixteen usually (though not always) do the ploughing, and the women cultivate the growing crops and do the harvesting.

As we should expect under a subsistence economy, there is little room in the Reserves for craftsmen such as

<sup>1</sup> 1 Morgen = 2½ acres.

builders, carpenters, and blacksmiths. Society is too poor under such primitive conditions to enable craftsmen to make a living. Most trading is in the hands of European traders, and a large proportion of the population of the Reserves is in debt to the traders. It should be remembered that the largest export with which the inhabitants of the Reserves must pay for the goods they get from the traders is labour. In some districts a very high proportion of the adult males is away at any one time earning cash wages. This is not very good for the Reserves, and it can be imagined what the results would be for a European town if, say, more than 50 per cent. of the fathers and elder brothers of that town had to travel hundreds of miles away from home in order to earn a living.

The kind of settlement in the Reserves differs in different parts of the country. Among some tribes there are little villages with huts close together; with other tribes the huts are scattered. The arrangement depends to a large extent on the social institutions of the tribe. The Bantu have different ways of reckoning relationship and where we think of a family as consisting of a mother and father and children their family may mean much more than that. Among the Nguni group of tribes, the definition of family or household is a most complicated one and it results in each household being considered as an independent territorial unit. Thus, among these tribes, we find the scattered type of settlement. Among the Sotho tribes, on the other hand, the households are grouped closer together and the result is a real village as Europeans understand the term. Among practically all the tribes the cattle kraal is the centre of the village. It is not only the place to which the cattle are brought at night, but it serves as a meeting-place for the men on occasions such as those when ceremonial sacrifices have

to be made. Near the central cattle kraal is the council place, usually under a big tree, where discussions take place and where tribal justice is administered. The dwelling huts, each surrounded by a small courtyard, are scattered round this central feature of the village. The villages are mostly small, consisting of about a dozen huts, and are usually about a mile away from each other. It must be remembered that a village does not consist of a number of families, as reckoned by European custom, but of the members of one family according to the custom of the particular tribe. The head of the family in each village is the village headman.

The kind of hut built varies a good deal, but there are two main types. The Nguni tribes build huts by planting long saplings in a circle and then bending them inwards so that the whole hut looks like a hemisphere on top of a cylinder. The hut is then thatched with grass and one or more poles are planted in the centre to support the roof. The door is a semicircular opening and the interior is usually plastered with mud and cowdung. The Sotho, the Shangana-Tonga, and the Venda tribes construct their huts by planting poles in a circle and then plastering them with mud. The roof is shaped like a cone and is separately made, usually overlapping the walls of the hut. The floors are of earth plastered over with mud and cowdung and the hut has a bigger doorway than with the Nguni. These huts are cheap to make and when they become verminous, or when the white ants invade them, or when a death takes place, they can be destroyed and new ones built without much economic loss. This renewal happens quite frequently. The huts are chiefly used as sleeping apartments and as storerooms. Inside a hut will be found articles like pots, bowls, drinking vessels, brooms, and other household utensils. Mostly

these are home-made, though the manufactured articles bought from the European store are rapidly replacing the old home-made utensils. The people sleep on mats and have wooden head-rests for pillows. Calabashes are used for storing water and milk and conical-shaped soft baskets are used for straining beer. The fireplace is usually in the centre. Gardening implements, such as hoes and spades, stand against the wall of the hut.

The Bantu usually get up at sunrise and begin the work of the day. The women and girls fetch water and wood and attend to the household duties such as sweeping and washing the household utensils; the younger men will be out in the fields, usually quite close to the village, or busy with some manual work, such as building a hut; the young boys will be looking after the cattle. The older men will probably be at the village council place exchanging news and gossip, administering justice, or discussing village matters. The first meal of the day is usually taken at about ten o'clock, but the men who are out at work or at the council-place do not come back to the huts for it; the food is taken to them. As a rule, the meal consists of mealie porridge. In the late afternoon bathing takes place, and after that, the real work of the day is done and the women begin to prepare the second or evening meal. This also consists of porridge, but there may be some meat or vegetables. This is a family meal, as every one is now at home. After the meal they will probably sit round and talk and, perhaps, ask each other riddles, while the children are told stories of the past, or fairy tales, until everybody goes to bed.

As we see, the chief food for the two daily meals is maize. Small amounts of meat, poultry, eggs, milk, and vegetables are used, but, on the whole, the diet in the Reserves is badly balanced and many of the Bantu are

undernourished. It is often found that when the men go to the mines they have to do light work for a while until they have been properly fed. Both the adults and the children in the Reserves show many signs of diseases that are the result of poverty and undernourishment.

The social life of the people in the Reserves has not yet been nearly as much influenced by European civilization as it has been in the urban areas where tribal life and tribal social ideas have been largely modified or even abandoned. The Reserves in the Cape Province have been longest in touch with European civilization and even there life is still lived largely according to old Bantu custom. This is even more true of the Reserves in the other Provinces. As with Europeans, Bantu laws and customs are a growth of centuries and were evolved through generations to meet the needs of society. European administrations have not always understood this in the past and very often laws and customs that appeared strange or unnecessary to the European were abolished, to the great detriment of Bantu society. To-day missionaries and governments are more and more realizing that there is a great deal in Bantu custom that is worth using as a foundation for more progressive laws. This is particularly true in the Reserves, where the influence of European customs has not been so strong.

Bantu children learn from their parents the knowledge that they need in order to live the kind of life that their parents are living. They grow up learning a very great deal about herbs and animals and birds and they usually know far more about the habits of these things than European children do. They learn the customary methods of dealing with cattle and with crops. They gradually acquire a knowledge of the customs of their tribe, of what is considered good manners, of their family



and social duties and rights. When the children reach a certain age they are taken with the others of their age and sex to an initiation school. Here they are given special and secret instruction in sex matters and in tribal lore and they have to undergo quite severe physical endurance tests. The initiation schools are accompanied by a good deal of ceremonial display and when the initiation period is over the boy or girl is admitted as a member of the tribe who is able to take a proper part in tribal life. (In some parts of Africa missionaries have attempted to use these initiation ceremonies as a basis for more civilized and scientific instruction.) Since the primitive Bantu agriculture is quite unscientific and unprogressive and since the Bantu do not know much about hygiene, the knowledge that is passed on to the children by the parents is not very helpful except for the limited life in the tribe.

Bantu parents are, as a rule, very fond of their children and, though they train them strictly in good manners, they seldom beat them. They frighten them with bogies and often the European is the boggy-man. The children have many games; some of them, such as hopscotch and hide-and-seek, have been taken over from the Europeans, but others are of Bantu origin. Here is a description of one such game played by Xosa boys in the Transkei. (The description is taken from T. H. Soga's book, *The Ama-Xosa: Life and Customs*.) The game is called the 'water game' and is played by a number of boys when out swimming. All except one get into the pool. He sees where the others are and then dives in, swimming under the water until he thinks he has come to where one of the others is. If he can touch this one before he escapes he changes places with him. This game goes on until some one calls out '*Qina*' ('tie knots in the grass'),

professional song-makers. These songs are rather like long poems reciting the virtues of the tribe or the chief and they are chanted rather than sung. Bantu languages are very musical, so that a long recital of this kind is like a song and is usually very dramatic. The Bantu had no written language before the Europeans came, and their songs and stories were handed down from generation to generation. Their stories are very much like the myths and legends of Europe. They are very fond of riddles and proverbs and this is natural in a people that, until recently, had no written literature; the wisdom and philosophy of the tribe is expressed in short and pointed proverbs or riddles which are easily remembered.

The Bantu in the Reserves, and a great many of them outside the Reserves, believe in magic. Before we examine this statement, we must remember that they are not unique in this respect. All people try to account for the things that happen round about them and when they think they have done so they try to prevent the unpleasant things from happening to them. They notice that crops are destroyed by hail or by drought in one year or in one place and not in another and they try to find out why this is so. Before the coming of scientific knowledge to explain these things, people invent good and evil spirits to account for everything that happens. It is only comparatively recently that European civilization has arrived at the scientific stage of knowledge and even to-day a very great number of Europeans believe in magic in various forms. We still see in the newspapers, from time to time, items referring to the practice of magic in the more backward parts of Europe. In South Africa many Europeans believe in the power of good and evil spirits and try to get themselves cured by magic rather than by science. If we bear these facts in mind, we shall be able

to understand more sympathetically the existence of magic among the Bantu.

Since many of the Bantu believe in the existence of good and evil spirits that control the affairs of men, it is natural that they should try to control the spirits. This is done either by trying to please the spirits, as in the ceremonial slaughter of cattle or in harvest ceremonies, or by the special use of magic on the part of magicians or witch-doctors. These are people who undergo secret courses of training and who possess special knowledge; they naturally have a great deal of power over their fellow-men. The Bantu believe that magic can be used in a good and in an evil way. It is used evilly to bewitch people and to give them diseases or to cause them some other misfortune. It is used in a good way to avoid misfortune or to cure diseases. Diviners or 'bone-throwers' are the people who must find out why certain things have happened. They have a complicated system of rules, gained by long training and practice, by which they throw a specially selected set of bones on the ground. From the way in which the bones fall and lie they tell what has happened or what is going to happen. From this knowledge a remedy may be prescribed.

Bantu medicine is a mixture of medicine and magic, and the herbalists are the medical practitioners who use specially prepared herbs and doctor them with magic. It is, of course, true that herbs and plants contain the ingredients of many of the medicines prescribed for us by doctors, and Bantu herbalists have a remarkable knowledge of the medicinal and curative value of these plants. They effect cures of all kinds of diseases and many Europeans who have lived among Bantu tribes use their prescriptions. Because the cures are so often mixed with magic, European scientists have usually dismissed

them as superstition. They might very well disregard the magic and investigate the cures scientifically.

Wherever European civilization comes into touch with Bantu civilization the belief in magic will ultimately disappear. But the process is very slow, particularly where the Bantu are separated from the main mass of the Europeans. In the Reserves, European hospitals and schools and churches are gradually doing their work. A small proportion of Bantu children in the Reserves go to mission schools and learn the elements of European education. Bantu teachers and doctors are being trained and work among their own people. But there are not nearly enough schools and hospitals and doctors. Hundreds of doctors and school-teachers would be required to make it possible for every person who was ill to see a properly trained doctor and for every child to go to school. And many more hospitals and school buildings would be required to take the patients and the children. The Reserves are, however, too poor to pay for these themselves.

Besides education and religion and scientific medicine, there are other influences in the Reserves that are helping to break down the old ways of living. Motor-cars and telephones, other European machinery, European clothes, European and Bantu newspapers, are all eating away at the old tribal customs. The young men who go out to find work on the mines and in the towns come back with new ideas. In the Reserves the Bantu themselves distinguish between what they call the 'dressed' and the 'blanket' Bantu. There is a growing struggle between the new ideas and the old conservative ideas. While we may welcome signs of change for the better, we may well sympathize with the older Bantu, who deplore the passing of old customs and complain that their children do not

behave as children should. Also, we must not exaggerate the extent to which traditional Bantu society in the Reserves has broken up. In spite of all the influences at work, it remains true that the vast majority of Bantu in the Reserves are comparatively untouched by European civilization except in such outward matters as food and implements and clothing. Those who come back from European areas bring new ideas, but they are largely concerned with material things. Most of the people are still illiterate and superstitious and live in fear of spirits.

In considering the question of how the Reserves are governed to-day, it is necessary to distinguish clearly between the system usually known as the 'Transkei system' and that of the Reserves where the Transkei system has not yet been introduced. In both cases, when we speak of how the Reserves are governed, we refer to local government; the general administrative system of the Union, as far as it concerns the Bantu, will be described separately. What we have here called the Transkei system was begun in 1894 by the Glen Grey Act of that year. By this Act there were set up two sorts of local government. In the first place, wherever there is a location of landowners a Location Board of three members is appointed by the Governor-General after the magistrate of the district has found out, at a public meeting, whom the landowners want. These Location Boards are chosen for one year and have certain duties connected with the control of watercourses, irrigation, grass-burning, and the regulation of common grazing ground. In the second place, the Glen Grey Act established a District Council for the whole of the Glen Grey district. This Council consists of twelve members, six nominated and appointed by the Governor-General and six nominated by the Location Boards and appointed by the Governor-General. The

magistrate is Chairman of the Council, which is chosen for three years.

This Council usually meets once a month and its duties are to attend to the making and repairing of roads, the construction of dipping-tanks, agricultural improvement generally, afforestation, and public health. In order to carry out its duties, the Council receives all the quitrents paid in its district and has the power to levy a tax on land if this should be necessary. It will give some idea of the work and responsibilities of the Council if we realize that it has spent over £50,000 on road-making and keeps a permanent staff of road-workers; it has made and controls many dipping-tanks; and it maintains an experimental farm for the benefit of the landowners in the district. The annual revenue of the Council is about £10,000.

The Glen Grey system, with modifications, has gradually been extended to practically all the Reserves in the Transkei, and it is unnecessary to mention all the changes that took place at various times in the method of election, the functions of the Councils, and their revenue. Just one important difference between the original Glen Grey system and its extension to the Transkei must be mentioned. In the Transkei there are no Location Boards. There are District Councils and there is a General Council. There are twenty-six District Councils, each consisting of the magistrate and six Councillors. Two of these Councillors are nominated and appointed by the Governor-General and the remaining four are nominated by the inhabitants and appointed by the Governor-General, except in Pondoland, where the chiefs nominate two Councillors. In addition to the District Councils, there is the United Transkeian Territories General Council. The Chief Magistrate of the Transkei is Chairman of

this Council and the twenty-six district magistrates are members. Each district sends three Councillors, one nominated and appointed by the Governor-General and two nominated by the District Council for appointment by the Governor-General. The chiefs of Tembuland, Eastern Pondoland, and Western Pondoland are also members. Since this Council represents more than 1,000,000 Bantu it is worth while to show in greater detail how it works.

The annual meeting of the Council at Umtata is called the Bunga and it takes place in a very fine building. Any matter affecting the welfare of the Bantu may be discussed and the debates are lively and of a high standard, because the members of the Bunga are well-informed on the subjects under discussion. After a debate a resolution is passed and this is sent to the Government or, if it is something which affects the Transkei only, it is acted upon by the Executive Committee of the Council. The matters which are usually discussed and decided upon are education, agriculture, Bantu laws and customs, roads, forests, common grazing grounds, and the revenue and expenditure of the Council. The Executive Committee consists of eight members, the Chief Magistrate, three other magistrates appointed by him, and four Bantu members elected by the Council itself. This Committee carries into effect resolutions of the Council and is responsible for the administration of the Council's affairs in such matters as the appointment of officials, public works, education, and agriculture.

The District Councils carry out the work of the General Council under the direction of the Executive. If a road has to be made in a district the General Council votes the necessary money and the District Council makes the road. The District Councils have no funds of their own

and all the money for the work in the different districts must be voted by the General Council. The revenue of the General Council consists of a local tax of 10s. per hut and of all quitrents collected in Council districts. The annual revenue is about £160,000. This fact, and the following, will give some idea of the importance of the work done by the Councils. The General Council maintains over 4,000 miles of roads costing about £60,000 a year; it has constructed and maintains over 1,000 dipping-tanks; it maintains seven agricultural schools and demonstration farms; it employs Bantu agricultural demonstrators. These demonstrators, after having been trained at one of the agricultural schools, travel about the territories assisting farmers with advice, encouraging them to use better implements, demonstrating the best methods of stock-raising and of sowing, organizing agricultural shows, and giving lectures. The Council also maintains about fifty scholarships a year and helps to pay for the medical services of the territories.

From the above description, we see that the District Councils and the General Council have two main functions: to administer local government and to give the Union Government advice by acting as a link between the Government and the people of the territories. The Transkei system is very important in the study of the administration of the Bantu, because it is different from systems adopted in other parts of Africa. There have been various criticisms of it, such as that the magistrates have too much authority and that the Bantu are not really learning to control their own affairs; that the Government ought to make much more money available from the general revenue of the country to deal with the many problems of soil erosion, health, and education; that the Government asks the advice of the Council, but does not



accept it. Even though there may be a certain amount of truth in these criticisms, it remains true that the Transkei system has worked reasonably well.

Outside of the Transkeian territories there are various forms of administering the Reserves. In the Free State there are three Reserves, at Witzieshoek, Thaba 'Nchu, and Seliba, in the Thaba 'Nchu district. Here there are Reserve Boards of Management, consisting of a Chairman and Vice-chairman, who must be Europeans, and from five to seven Bantu members nominated and appointed by the Governor-General. These Boards may make regulations, subject to the approval of the Governor-General, on a number of local matters, such as water supply, afforestation, and grazing. The revenue of the Boards consists of a local tax of 10s. per hut.

A large number of the Reserves in the Transvaal and Natal are administered directly by the officials of the Native Affairs Department. The Native Affairs Act of 1920 makes it possible to establish local Councils in any particular Reserve, and such Councils work in much the same way as those in the Transkei do. About twenty such Councils have been established and some of them may later be combined on the lines of the Transkei General Council. At the present time, however, most of the extensive Reserves of Natal and the Transvaal fall under the Native Affairs Department. This means that there are Chief Native Commissioners, Native Commissioners, and Assistant Native Commissioners for each area. They are appointed by the Governor-General and their duties are laid down by regulation. They are responsible for the administration of their area, for carrying out laws made by Parliament, for keeping law and order. They must travel through their districts, meet the chiefs and headmen, listen to grievances, and

keep the Government informed of all that takes place. They are responsible for tax-collection and have certain judicial functions and, under them, those chiefs whom the Government has appointed perform certain judicial and administrative duties.

The Government has appointed about 1,700 chiefs, who have certain duties in exchange for the performance of which they get a small salary and are entitled to customary dues, such as first-fruits and beer, and to a proportion of the fines that they may inflict. The chiefs' courts try civil cases, while criminal cases go before the Native Commissioner or the magistrate. The chiefs are responsible for assisting in tax-collection, reporting crime or unusual happenings, and for allotting land to the individual members of the tribe. They and the headmen must assist the Government officials in explaining the laws to the people and in maintaining order. The chiefs have lost a great deal of their former authority because of the impact of European civilization. Many of the older people and quite a number of the younger ones are, however, still very loyal to their chiefs and would like to see some of their authority restored. But many of the chiefs are uneducated and unprogressive and, indeed, there is little incentive for them to be anything else, since European rule has undermined their authority while still holding them responsible for keeping order. Thus, though tribesmen are still loyal to their chiefs, they are becoming more and more critical of them, especially the tribesmen who have been for any length of time among the Europeans and freed from tribal customs. Under a recent law, the chiefs have been given certain functions in connexion with the election of Senators for the Union Parliament and of members of the Natives' Representative Council. This will be described in another chapter.

In a previous chapter Bantu law and custom were described. In South Africa Bantu law and custom are recognized in purely Bantu cases, provided that such law does not conflict with European conceptions of morality and justice. Where Europeans and Bantu live in the same towns and on the same farms European law is mostly applied. But in the Reserves Bantu law is recognized and applied to a very large extent by chiefs or by European magistrates or Native Commissioners. Bantu law is customary and not written, and so, when Europeans administer it, they often have to call in the assistance of Bantu assessors to find out what the custom of the particular tribe is. In Natal the Government has codified Bantu law in what is known as the Natal Native Code. Bantu law has, of course, been much modified by European law made directly by Parliament or by proclamation of the Governor-General, who is the Supreme Chief of all the Bantu in the Union.

Various special courts have been established in order to provide a cheaper method of justice for the Bantu. In Natal there is the Natal Native High Court, which deals, with certain exceptions, with civil and criminal cases. Then there are two Native Appeal Courts for hearing appeals from the courts of Native Commissioners. One of these is at King William's Town, for the Orange Free State and the Cape, and the other is at Pretoria, for the Transvaal and Natal. Lastly, there are two Native Divorce Courts. It must be remembered that the Bantu are subject to the ordinary laws of the land and that the ordinary courts are open to them if they wish to use them and have the money to do so.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE BANTU ON EUROPEAN FARMS IN THE UNION

**I**N describing the Native Reserves in South Africa, we saw how it came about that the Bantu formed the chief labour force of the country. As the land was settled by the Europeans, the amount of land available for the Bantu was steadily reduced. That, and other factors, forced the Bantu to seek employment from the Europeans and to exchange their labour either for cash or for a place to live on. According to the Census of 1936, there are about  $2\frac{1}{4}$  million Bantu on European farms throughout the Union. Of these, almost half are in the Transvaal, and the remainder are fairly equally divided between the other three Provinces. Except for a comparatively small area of the Western Province of the Cape, we may say that the agricultural labour of South Africa is performed by the Bantu.

South African farms differ in size according to the climate and the kind of farming, and the number of labourers employed will also depend on this. Sheep and cattle farming would require less permanent labour than fruit or crop farming. The form of contract between the labourer and his employer varies, almost from district to district, and it would be impossible to give a complete account of it here. There are two main systems of employment, that in which a cash wage plus payment in kind is given, and that in which there is no cash wage at all. The amount given in cash and the value of the payment in kind depend on a number of factors, such as the nearness to the Reserves; the nearness to big towns or the mines,

the value of the land, or the individuality of the farmer and of the labourer. Near to the Reserves it is easy to get Bantu labour cheaply; near to the big towns or the mines it is not. Many Bantu will prefer to work for a considerate and kind employer for less pay than they would otherwise accept. In other words, there is nothing like a standard wage in agriculture, not even in any one district.

It is very difficult to say what proportion of Bantu agricultural labourers work for cash wages and what proportion for wages in kind only. In many parts of Natal and the Transvaal there is a system of labour-tenancy where a man and his family are allowed to settle on a European farm, to graze cattle there and to cultivate a field; in return for this he and his family must perform a certain number of days' labour for the farmer. Sometimes it is ninety days a year and sometimes two days a week. The number of cattle that may be grazed will depend partly on the amount of land available and partly on the value of the land in that area. During his free period the labourer will either hire himself for cash to the farmer or else go off to look for a cash wage elsewhere, probably in the towns. This system of labour is wasteful for the farmer, because it means that while he has a number of families on his farm he is getting labour from a proportion of them only. It is also bad for the labourer, because he gets no cash wage and his position is insecure. But at present it suits those farmers who have large farms, as in the North-eastern Transvaal, because they pay out no cash and they would not in any case use the land they are giving to their workers. It suits many Bantu, who do not so much want a cash wage as a place where they can keep their beloved cattle. As the value of land rises, the farmers will be forced to hire their labour

for cash rather than exchange land for it. This is happening at the present time, and more and more farmers are finding it advantageous to pay cash wages plus some payment in kind. It should be mentioned that included in the number of Bantu on European farms is a fairly large number who live on the land of land companies in the Transvaal and pay an annual rent to the companies.

In most parts of the Orange Free State and in the Cape Province the system of cash plus payment in kind is in force. For an adult male labourer an average wage is about 10s. a month plus food, grazing for a number of cattle, and a couple of morgen of land to cultivate. Here the farmer hires his labour on a monthly or yearly contract. The food that is given consists chiefly of maize, though this varies a great deal with the individual farmer. Some farmers try to give their workmen a balanced diet which will include milk, meat, and vegetables. Most farmers, however, give maize and, perhaps, some skimmed milk. One result of this is that there is a great deal of stock theft on the farms. On some farms the workers can make extra cash by selling their surplus produce and on sheep farms they are usually paid extra for shearing. It is very difficult to estimate what the total cash value of the labourer's wage is, partly because the amounts differ so much from farm to farm and partly because the value depends on such things as the current price of land and of maize. On an average the wages of a farm labourer are probably about £18 a year, of which £5 is in cash and the balance in kind.

Bantu workers on farms usually live about a mile away from the European dwelling-house. Their huts will be of the kind that they are accustomed to build and will often be near a fountain or a *spruit*. There may be perhaps four or five families on an average mixed farm of about

800 morgen, and these families form a little community of their own. All the men will be engaged on farm work, ploughing, milking, dam-making, gardening, reaping or shearing, while one or two of the women will be engaged to do domestic work for the employer and will sometimes be paid a small monthly wage for this. The other women will be at the huts looking after the children or attending to their homes, or else cultivating their own or the farmer's fields. Their life is not very much unlike the life in the Reserves, except, of course, that they are employed by some one else and are not working entirely for themselves. Their social life is very simple and monotonous. Usually there is a weekly beer-drinking party at their own huts or at those on a neighbouring farm. An occasional visit to the nearest town enables them to buy, or to barter for fowls or skins, the few simple things that they can afford. Many of them belong to Christian Churches and occasionally go to town for a religious service; but many of them are almost as untouched by European civilization as their fellows in the Reserves. On a few farms there are schools established by the Native Education Department. The Bantu, and especially those who have been in contact with the Europeans for some time, are beginning to realize the value of education for their children, and this is one of the reasons why they move into towns to look for work. Farmers are realizing this, too, and the Education Departments are receiving an increasing number of applications from farmers for the establishment of farm schools. Some Bantu parents send their children to stay with relatives or friends in town so that they can go to school. The vast majority of parents and children on farms are illiterate. Magic and superstition play a large part in their lives, though to a decreasing extent. It is

difficult for them to keep up tribal customs on the farms, and those who have been on European farms for any length of time are losing their tribal loyalty. The extent to which this happens depends partly on the distance of the farm from their original home in the Reserves. When they work near to the Reserves, the parents sometimes send their children home for the initiation ceremonies.

The kind of work done by the Bantu workers on European farms is often of a responsible nature. All the hard manual work is done by them, sometimes without much supervision. But they are also entrusted with the more delicate tasks such as separating the cream, butter-making, marketing and skilled mechanical work. Taking into account their lack of training, the Bantu show a remarkable aptitude for all kinds of skilled labour, and farmers would often have to pay much more for such work if they had it done at the nearest town. Repairing motor-cars and agricultural machinery, mending shoes, doing odd carpentering jobs—all these things are often part of the work of a Bantu labourer more skilled than his fellows. As a rule, such a labourer gets a slightly higher monthly wage.

Bantu names are often very confusing to the European and difficult to pronounce, so that both on the farms and in the towns they usually take a European name, by which they are known to their employers. Often they were unable to think of a name, so the employer gave them one. That is why so many Bantu men have names which are really nicknames, like 'August', 'September', 'April', 'Sixpence', or 'Kleinbooï'. Bantu workers are usually called by their first names, unlike European workers, who are called 'Mr. Smith' or, by their surname, just 'Smith'. The Bantu are beginning to resent this custom because it seems to imply that they are being looked down



upon. In the towns educated Europeans when talking to educated Bantu usually now call them by their Bantu names and add the prefix 'Mr.'

When the Bantu first began to work on European farms the early Boer farmers treated them patriarchally—that is, in a stern but kindly fashion. The workers were very often brought into family prayers. But this tradition has almost entirely died out, and though the relation between the farmer and his workers is very often friendly and leisurely, as befits life on a farm, it is much more a business relation than it used to be. There are, too, a number of points of friction between the European farmer and his Bantu labourer. Where the labour-tenancy system exists, the contract is seldom a written one, and there are innumerable disputes between the farmer and the labourer as to exactly what was included in the contract. This is probably the cause of most of the cases under the Masters and Servants Acts, which will be described in a subsequent chapter. Again, the farmer and his labourer, as a rule, do not understand each other's language or customs, and this is a frequent source of friction. Under this system, too, the farmer makes a contract with the head of the family and sometimes the younger members go off to the towns without the permission of the head. The farmer then accuses the labourer of having broken the contract. Bantu parents complain that their authority is undermined because their children have to take orders from the farmer, and yet the farmer holds them responsible for the children's actions. Since the farmer and his labourer will be doing the same kind of farming, requiring concentrated work at particular periods, such as reaping or sowing, there will naturally be disputes and ill feeling as to whose work must be done first. That is one of the disadvantages to the Bantu workman

of payment in terms of land. Another disadvantage is that he depends for his living on one crop and if that fails he will have to buy food. Some farmers are generous in this matter and supply maize if there has been a crop failure, but the system leaves the worker at the mercy of the individual farmer. Most farmers, in such cases, lend money to the labourer, and many Bantu workers are in debt to their employers. Here, again, they are at a disadvantage, because, if they want to look for work elsewhere, they must first persuade their new employer to pay their debts to the old one. The Bantu worker is further handicapped in that, before he may look for work elsewhere, he must obtain a pass from his employer. Many of them try to evade this and risk imprisonment in their efforts to find other work. In 1936 there were 62,000 convictions in the courts for evasion of pass regulations.

In recent years there has been a strong tendency for Bantu who have been agricultural labourers to migrate to the towns, and farmers are constantly complaining about a shortage of labour. This 'drift to the towns', as it is called, is largely due to the more attractive conditions in the towns. The Bantu labourer hopes to get in the towns better pay for his services, education for his children, better housing, more social amenities, and a better diet. Also, as land becomes more valuable, farmers are able to offer less grazing land, and it is this grazing land that is the most attractive thing to the Bantu cattle owner. It seems likely that, as farmers are faced with a shortage of labour and as they cannot afford to increase the amount of grazing, agricultural wages will rise and farmers will begin to train their labourers to be more efficient. At present the Bantu, although he can work hard and continuously, is a very leisurely worker, and

there is not much incentive to him to work more rapidly. This does not matter to the farmer as long as he can get plenty of labour cheaply; but with the increasing wages that the urban industries are beginning to pay, the farmers will, in self-defence, have to alter their labour policy to one of fewer workers, more pay, and greater efficiency.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE BANTU IN EUROPEAN TOWNS IN THE UNION

**I**N describing the life of the Bantu worker on the farms, we saw that there was a tendency for the Bantu to migrate to the towns. Between 1921 and 1936 the Bantu population in the towns has more than doubled itself, and in 1936 there were just over 1,000,000 Bantu people in the European towns and on the mines. The number in each town varies according to the European population and according to the geographical position of the town. In the Western Province of the Cape there are very few Bantu, their place being taken mostly by coloured people. For the rest of South Africa we may say that, as a general rule, there are as many Bantu as European inhabitants in any town except where there are mines and industries, and there the Bantu population is larger than the European. In the bigger towns of Natal there are fewer Bantu and proportionately more Asiatics.

In the vast majority of cases every South African township consists of two distinct and separate townships, one for the European and one for the Bantu. The best way to find out what a Bantu township looks like is to visit one. Conditions vary so much from place to place and from province to province that a complete description would be impossible here. But a description of some of the general features will enable us to form a mental picture of the whole. When you leave the poorer quarter of the European town and walk for about half a mile you begin to come to the outskirts of the Bantu township. At once you notice differences as compared with the European quarter. The houses are small and badly constructed; sometimes

they are mere corrugated-iron sheds. The streets are poor, badly kept, and very dusty. There are very few trees and no parks; there are no big public buildings except the churches, of which there are many; here and there we see a small but better-built house and, occasionally, an attempt at a flower garden. But the general impression is one of squalor and poverty and dustiness unrelieved by any of the amenities of civilization. In some of the bigger urban areas the Bantu township may have a cinema hall, a recreation ground, a few school buildings, street lamps, and some attempt at tree-planting. In these towns, too, water is laid on to public taps; but it is very seldom laid on to the houses and in many of the smaller towns the Bantu inhabitants have to walk more than a mile for every drop of water they use. In one location there is one  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch tap for over 200 inhabitants. In one or two towns there is water-borne sewage, but in the vast majority the pail system is used.

All over the world, the question of housing urban populations is a very important one. The poorest sections of the community can seldom afford to build their own houses, and municipalities everywhere, in Europe and in America, are faced with the problem of providing suitable and cheap houses for the mass of the working population. In South Africa, too, this is the case. The Urban Areas Act of 1923 (to be described in a later chapter) places the responsibility for the provision of housing for the Bantu on the shoulders of the local authority—that is, the municipality. But by the time this Act was passed most locations were already in existence. The municipalities have therefore had to do two things: get rid of the old houses that were bad and insanitary and provide new ones. This enormous task has only just been begun, and it is true to say that, at the present moment, the majority

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of Bantu inhabitants of European towns live in unsuitable houses.

In this business of providing houses, the municipalities have been faced with the fundamental difficulty that the Bantu are too poorly paid to be able to afford high rents, and, consequently, houses must be cheaply built. In some towns in Europe the local authorities have come to the conclusion that the only way to provide houses for the poorest people is to charge an uneconomic rent, that is a rent that is too low to pay the interest on the money spent. In such cases the richer people pay higher rates to make up for the difference. In South Africa, however, the municipalities have always tried to make the Bantu townships pay for themselves. Because of this, and because of the low wages of the Bantu, the rehousing schemes have not got very far yet. In a great number of the larger towns a number of the Bantu live, not in separate areas, but in slum areas in the European quarter. In all the towns the Bantu township is largely a slum area. That means that the houses are insanitary and overcrowded. In some parts, chiefly in the big towns, five and six people to one small and badly ventilated room is quite a common condition.

Where the local authorities have begun the work of rehousing, there have been two main methods. In Bloemfontein the Bantu mostly build their own houses while the municipality constructs some for hire. Where they build their own houses the municipality advances materials up to the value of about £35. The owner of the house probably makes his own bricks and builds the house in his spare time. The loan is repaid gradually by monthly payments. Such a house may have four rooms, each about 12 feet by 12. In other towns, such as Johannesburg, the municipality usually builds the houses and rents them to

the Bantu. One mistake that was made with this scheme was to use highly paid European labour. The result is that the capital cost of the houses requires a rent that is more than most Bantu workers can afford. Wherever municipalities begin to plan new Bantu townships they try to avoid the old mistakes and they provide for open spaces and for halls and other public buildings. One very important point that has to be borne in mind is the distance of the Bantu township from the place of work of the inhabitants. Most of the old settlements of Bantu near to European towns and villages are several miles away from the place of work and the tendency of the newer townships is to be even further away. Unless cheap transport is provided, this is a very great hardship for people who have to be at work at an early hour. Where transport has been provided, as at Cape Town and Johannesburg, it adds a considerable amount to the workman's monthly expenses.

As regards the housing of the urban Bantu, there is, therefore, a great variety of conditions. Some municipalities have made good progress in clearing away the old slums and building good new houses; in most towns, however, the work of rehousing according to a proper plan is going very slowly and, meanwhile, the old slums continue to exist. The vast majority of the Bantu do not own their own houses, but hire houses or rooms from the municipalities or from other Bantu owners. They do not, in any case, own the land on which the houses stand, since they may not own land in European areas.

Inside the houses we find an equally great variety of conditions. In most cases the furniture is very poor. When four or five people live in one room there is not much space for furniture. What furniture there is, is usually cheap—perhaps a broken-down bedstead, some

very old chairs, and a box-table. There will also be the usual household utensils like pots and pans and cheap crockery. Very occasionally we find among the more educated Bantu who are drawing higher wages houses that compare favourably with those of the Europeans. These houses will have good furniture, some pictures and books, and perhaps a gramophone or a piano.

In most South African towns probably the majority of the Bantu are employed as domestic servants; and they are often housed with their employers in rooms separate from the main building. In some towns Bantu women are the domestic servants, while in other towns the men do this work. In all towns the men are employed as shop-messengers, gardeners, brickmakers, and on unskilled and semi-skilled labour in building, road-making, dairying, and a number of other trades and occupations. Practically no European workman is without his Bantu assistant. In the larger towns, where industries are located, the Bantu are increasingly being drawn into the secondary industries as semi-skilled and skilled workers. As technical improvements are made in industrial processes, the need for skilled workers of the old kind grows less. In most factories in Europe and America the workers do not have to serve a long apprenticeship as they used to forty years ago; and, having worked in one factory, they can quite easily work in another. This is becoming increasingly true in South African industries and, since Bantu labour is cheaper than European labour and can be trained just as rapidly, it is natural that an increasing number of Bantu will find employment in these industries.

The wages and conditions of labour in the towns, as on the farms, differ from town to town. In practically all domestic service the wage is not purely a cash wage. It includes food and lodging, of which the value is difficult



to estimate. In some of the bigger towns, like Johannesburg, a domestic servant may earn £4 or £5 a month plus board and lodging, but the average cash wage is probably about £1 per month. The number of hours worked depends entirely on the employer and in most cases they are very long, probably eleven or twelve hours a day. Most servants have an afternoon a week off and occasional holidays, but this again depends entirely on the employer.

In the industries the general rule is for a cash wage to be paid, and where food and lodging are included, this is optional and the worker may provide his own if he prefers. The average wage in industry is round about £1 per week and this sum includes board and lodging. Employers of large numbers of Bantu workers estimate that it costs them about 17s. a month to feed and house their workers, so that the average cash wage in industry would really be about £3 5s. a month. Most workers in industries work about six and a half days per week and the number of hours per day is not fixed by law. Nor does the law provide for paid holidays, and these will depend on the goodwill of the employer and on the kind of contract made between the worker and his employer. Most contracts, except on the mines, are monthly.

It is important to notice that the gap between the wages of unskilled Bantu and skilled European labour is very large. Usually the European skilled worker gets about six times as much as his Bantu semi-skilled or unskilled assistants. The result of this is that employers try to employ as many Bantu as they can. Bantu wages in the towns tend to remain low because there is a constant inflow of labour from the Reserves. A proportion of this inflow is still temporary labour and comes into the towns just to earn a small amount of cash before returning to the Reserves. Such Bantu labourers can therefore

afford to work for lower wages than the permanent urban labourer. At the same time, as we saw, the amount of skill required for industry is becoming less in a large number of occupations and the Bantu can acquire this skill very rapidly, in many cases within six months. Thus the Bantu from the Reserves competes on a lower wage scale with the urbanized Bantu and he, in his turn, competes with European labour of all kinds. The European workers have, usually, strong trade unions to protect their wage standards, but the Bantu have not yet been able to combine effectively for this purpose. Also, European law and custom have been able to prevent the Bantu from competing with Europeans in the skilled occupations, with the result that they are unable to reach skilled wages, while their semi-skilled wages are kept low by competition from the unskilled labour from the Reserves.

To understand the value of the wages earned by the Bantu in towns, we must know what has to be paid for out of wages and what the wages can buy. In the absence of more accurate figures than are at present available, it is difficult to estimate what the expenses of a Bantu family in a town are. In several towns of the Union, cost-of-living budgets for Bantu families have been made, and these put the actual expenses of a family of five in one of the bigger towns at about £6 10s. per month. This figure includes rent, food, taxes, clothes, and a few sundries. Even though these budgets are reasonably accurate, they represent what the family actually spends and not what it ought to spend for proper health and development. Professor Bowley estimated that, in England, the minimum that a family of five could live on was £6 10s. per month and Mr. Rowntree put the figure at about £11. In the first case there would be underfeeding and in

the second just enough of all the necessary food values. On careful examination, it will be found that conditions for the poor in England are not very different from those in South Africa.<sup>1</sup> The amounts the Bantu have to pay for rents and taxes are about the same as for the poorest classes in England. We may take it as certain that the big majority of Bantu in towns neither receive as wages nor spend on food the proper amount for a healthy existence, and most doctors who have had extensive dealings with urban Bantu say that malnutrition is widespread. Incidentally this is probably true of at least 30 per cent. of the population of England, too.

There is one very important point about wages and expenditure, and that is that a Bantu family of five usually spends more than the income of the head of the family, whose wages are insufficient to allow him to support his family. The result of this is that, very often, both the father and the mother are out at work, and this has serious disadvantages for the children whose parents are away for perhaps twelve hours during the day and come home tired at night. The children are neglected and family life ceases to exist.

Most of the articles that the Bantu buy they get from European stores. In the Orange Free State they are not allowed trading licences and in the other provinces they have been too poor to do much trading on their own account. In some of the bigger towns they are now beginning to go in for co-operative trading and in the Witwatersrand and Johannesburg locations there are about 500 shops owned by Bantu. On the outskirts of all European towns there are small shops owned by Europeans who very often employ Bantu salesmen; here most

<sup>1</sup> It must be remembered that the cost of food in South Africa is higher than in England.

of the Bantu trade is done. The quality of the goods bought is naturally very poor, with such low wages, and this means that they have to pay, in the end, more than people who can afford to buy good articles. In the Free State, as well as in other provinces, the Bantu are allowed to take out hawkers' licences and to open eating-houses where tinned foods, cigarettes and tobacco, and fresh food may be obtained. In one or two towns there is a Bantu market.

The Bantu in the towns have learnt to drink tea and coffee, but their favourite drink is still kaffir beer brewed from sprouted corn.<sup>1</sup> If this is properly brewed, it contains much nourishment and about twice as much alcohol as ginger-beer; it also provides yeast for breadmaking. Europeans have for a long time taken up the attitude that the Bantu must be allowed no strong drink at all, and in many towns beer is prohibited, though it is brewed illegally. In those towns where it is allowed, each family is permitted to brew a certain amount per day, or, otherwise, the municipality undertakes the brewing and sells the beer in municipal beer-halls. The profits from beer-halls go for the improvement of the Bantu town. The Bantu themselves, however, much prefer home-brewing because, they say, their womenfolk are the only ones who know how to brew it properly. European alcoholic drink may not be sold to the Bantu, and this has resulted in a very large illicit trade in liquor and also in the manufacture by the Bantu themselves of strong concoctions made by adding such harmful ingredients as raw spirit, carbide, and even boot-polish to kaffir beer. In the big towns this has become quite an industry and women do it to increase the family income. The trade is very profitable

<sup>1</sup> Kaffir beer looks rather like gruel and the taste is not unlike that of cider.

and is carried on in spite of police vigilance. In 1936 there were about 68,000 convictions on account of illicit liquor dealing and this probably represents a fraction only of the total trade.

Whenever a number of people live together in one area, it is to be expected that they will create social institutions for their leisure hours. The Bantu are employed for long hours; they have not much leisure. Nevertheless, in most Bantu towns will be found, on a much lower and poorer scale, some of the social institutions that Europeans have. Particularly in the larger towns will be found football, cricket, and tennis clubs; sometimes there will be a cinema; and, occasionally, a social club to which only a small proportion, representing the more educated Bantu, will belong. The sports clubs have names such as 'The Black Lions', 'The Early Rose', and 'Perseverance'. The Bantu have not yet learnt how to organize properly and very often these clubs split up owing to petty jealousy and bad organization.

There is not sufficient provision in the shape of playing-fields and equipment for the recreational needs of the town Bantu and, in some big towns, the absence of healthy sport leads to the formation of *amalayita* gangs of toughs who molest peaceable people and commit crimes of violence. The Manager of the Native Affairs Department in Johannesburg said that, to get rid of these disturbing gangs, it was essential for the municipality to organize sport for the Bantu inhabitants, so that they could have a healthy outlet for their energies. One or two municipalities are now doing something in this direction by the appointment of social welfare officers. At Bloemfontein the municipality pays the salary of a qualified Bantu secretary of the Bantu Social Institute and it is part of his work to organize games.

Because of the absence of proper lighting and the expense of candles and lamps the Bantu usually do what Europeans used to do in similar circumstances—go to bed early. But they do have concerts and dances and tea-parties as the Europeans do. Probably the biggest centres of social life are the churches. For various reasons, which will be dealt with in a later chapter, there are many more divisions among the Bantu than among the European Churches and, in addition to the missionary branches of the European Churches of South Africa, there will be found a large number of unattached Churches, often with very queer names. Most of the inhabitants belong to one or other of these religious institutions. The churches are important, too, because of the part they play in regard to education and social-welfare work. Education is neither compulsory nor free, as it is for Europeans. In most towns the majority of children of a school-going age are not at school. Since both parents are often away at work, the children grow up uneducated and uncontrolled and with very little idea of a law-abiding community life. In the Reserves the parents, especially the mothers, had time to look after the up-bringing of their children, who learnt good manners and their duties towards their families and their tribe. A great deal of this is missing in the towns, and the Bantu townships will become increasingly lawless unless a proper system of education takes the place of the old tribal traditions. In some of the more progressive towns, Europeans have started crèches to look after some of the smallest children of mothers who are away at work. There are also Wayfarer and Pathfinder detachments for girls and boys, and various European societies try to provide some social outlet for the children's energies. But all these attempts touch only the fringe of the problem.

It is only in a few of the big towns that special medical provision is made for the Bantu inhabitants. In those towns there is a Native Dispensary with a European doctor in charge, assisted by two or more fully trained Bantu nurses. Here Bantu patients can have minor ailments attended to, but for anything serious they would have to go to hospital. At the General Hospital they can be treated free of charge if they are sufficiently poor, but as soon as their income is more than £1 a month they have to pay. In all the hospitals under public control there are separate wards for Europeans and Bantu and, if we leave out the mine hospitals; there are about 5,000 beds available for Bantu patients in all the hospitals of the Union. Since the Bantu suffer much from diseases associated with poverty, the death-rate among the urban Bantu is high and the infant mortality is much higher than among Europeans.

It should be clearly realized that in most South African towns a large proportion of the Bantu population is now permanent and no longer looks forward, as in the old days, to a return to the Reserves. The Bantu townships, therefore, are permanent features of the South African social and economic life. A large number of the inhabitants of the towns know no other home. These permanent urban Bantu very largely follow European fashions in dress and amusements and in social and economic ways of living. The Bantu who wish to work for Europeans must be properly and tidily dressed else they would not get employment. No European would have a Bantu employee who was dressed in a blanket. The Bantu have to learn the European languages and have to adapt their lives to European standards. They have to work to a clock instead of to their own time. They have to accommodate themselves at every turn to European ideas.

A very important result of the permanence of the Bantu urban population is that an increasing number of men and women live in the towns, not to take service with Europeans, but to serve the various needs of their own community. Thus there are shoemakers, builders, carpenters, nurses, teachers, ministers, and, very occasionally, doctors, who make a living by supplying the wants of their own people. These Bantu are often the leading people in the town and occupy the better class of house. We might almost say that there is a Bantu middle class growing up in the urban areas and, though they are small in number, they form a very important section of the community. They are the natural leaders in the towns of those Bantu who have discarded their tribal allegiance.

While the Bantu in the towns are adapting themselves to European conditions and while it seems as if, eventually, tribal tradition and loyalty will pass away for the vast majority of townsmen, it is not yet true to say that the urban Bantu have no tribal connexions. We must remember that there is still a constant flow to and from the Reserves. In spite of the difficulties of observing tribal customs under the money economy conditions of the towns, many of these customs are still observed in a modified form by a large number of Bantu people. Thus birth, marriage, and death ceremonies are still frequently observed. The marriage dowry has been adapted to the money economy and, instead of cattle, money is paid, though this largely destroys the social value of the *lobola* system. Many Bantu parents send their children to the Reserves for the initiation ceremonies, since these cannot easily be observed in town. Chiefs from the Reserves often send councillors to visit their tribesmen in the towns so as to keep in touch with them and, frequently, to collect presents from them. But



tribalism, based as it is on the Bantu conception of the family and the village, is bound to be weakened in the towns, where economic conditions compel people to adopt a more individualist conception of the family and its obligations towards its members. Probably tribalism has been most weakened in the larger towns and is still fairly strong in the smaller villages. Although it is impossible to speak accurately about the extent to which tribal loyalties have broken down in urban areas, it will be evident that Bantu society in the towns is undergoing very severe strain in its efforts to adapt itself to European ideas.

Just as tribalism has not yet broken down, magic and superstition have by no means disappeared among the urban Bantu. Many of the tribal superstitions are still current, even among those Bantu who are members of a Christian Church. Magic has adapted itself very easily to the new needs in the towns, and superstitious Bantu will buy 'medicine' to prevent unemployment, to escape the police, and to avoid other unpleasant things. The herbalists, too, do a good trade in the towns where, as we saw, hospitals and medical aid were insufficient for the needs of the population, or where, as often happens, the Bantu distrust the European doctors or the hospitals.

Bantu townships are administered by the European municipalities under the Urban Areas Act. By this Act any town that has been proclaimed an urban area must appoint a Manager of the Bantu township and must keep a revenue and expenditure account separate from that of the European township. The appointment of the Manager is subject to the approval of the Minister of Native Affairs of the Union Government; so, too, are all regulations concerning the Bantu township made by the Town Council. The Manager or, as he is usually called, the Superintendent is assisted by a staff of officials and is

responsible to the Town Council. There is usually a sub-committee of the Town Council, called the Committee for Native Affairs, which is responsible for suggesting changes or proposing new regulations. The Town Council may appoint or let the inhabitants elect a Native Advisory Board of which the Manager is, as a rule, chairman. This Board meets at regular intervals and all proposed new regulations must be submitted to it for discussion and resolution before they are sent to the Minister of Native Affairs. The Boards are advisory and have no power to make or to alter regulations; but where the Town Council is anxious to have the goodwill of the Bantu inhabitants it will take notice of what the Board says. Under the Natives' Representation Act of 1936, which will be described in a later chapter, the Advisory Boards have a new and important function in the matter of electing a Senator to represent the Bantu and in electing members of the Natives' Representative Council of South Africa.

The Town Councils have wide powers for regulating and controlling the affairs of the Bantu town. They make regulations concerning housing, sanitation, lighting, water, passes, curfew, streets, and markets, and they have power to levy certain taxes. The local taxation in towns varies greatly. Usually there is a sanitary and water rate, a flat rate payable by all householders. Then there are lodgers' fees payable by the householder who hires out rooms. Another source of revenue for some Bantu towns is a tax on the European employer of labour for every male Bantu that he employs. All the local taxes paid by the Bantu inhabitants amount to between 15 per cent. and 20 per cent. of their monthly wage. The Town Councils also have powers to control the entrance of Bantu people into towns. Any one entering a town must get a pass to look for work from the Native Pass Office and if no work

is found within a reasonable time the pass is withdrawn and he must leave the town. Naturally, with big populations, it is impossible to control this completely.

In the towns the Bantu are subject to European laws, and the courts that they come into contact with most are the magistrates' courts for petty offences. In 1936 about 20,000 serious crimes were committed by Bantu people and of these about 6,000 were stock theft. The fact that there are about 6,000,000 Bantu in the Union and that the number of serious crimes was 20,000 bears out what most people who have had dealings with the Bantu say, that they are a very law-abiding people. The petty offences for which the urban Bantu come before the magistrates are of the kind that are due partly to poverty and partly to ignorance; or they are offences against laws that do not apply to Europeans. In 1936 there were 68,000 convictions for being in possession of kaffir beer; 63,000 for not having paid Poll Tax; 62,000 for not being in possession of a pass; 57,000 for contravention of municipal or Location regulations; and 30,000 for contravention of the Masters and Servants Acts or the Native Labour Regulations.

When Bantu people are brought before the magistrates they are often at a serious disadvantage. They are not familiar with European legal forms; they often do not speak or understand either English or Afrikaans fluently; they are too poor to employ legal aid; the magistrates are very busy and have not always the time to investigate cases fully. The courts are usually a long way off from a man's home or from his place of work and, since he has to spend much time waiting for his case to be tried, he loses time from his employment. Again, the fines that the magistrate may inflict are very heavy in proportion to his wage and so he has no alternative but to go to prison. It must

be remembered that a fine of 10s. or £1 may represent a month's wages to the Bantu.

In most towns there are Bantu policemen who work under the direction of the European police force. These police are recruited from different towns from the one in which they are stationed and they are often rather ignorant men who have very little idea of what their real duties as guardians of the law are. Both European and Bantu policemen are often unsympathetic towards the Bantu and, in big towns where the Bantu population is dense and police work difficult, they sometimes use methods that are harsh and violent.

It is clear, then, that the Bantu who live in European towns or who come there to work for a while have to adapt themselves to conditions that are very different from those that they are accustomed to in the Reserves. In the process of adaptation, they are faced with a host of difficulties and discouragement—difficulties of language, laws and regulations, social habits, and economic conceptions. And, at the same time, they have to be hard at work doing a great many unaccustomed things. They learn remarkably quickly, when we consider the disadvantages, and are soon in charge of responsible work in domestic service or in industry. European employers entrust them with their children, their food, their money, their animals, and their machinery, and, on the whole, they respond very well to their responsibilities and are cheerful and trustworthy workers.

The better-educated Bantu in the towns are very often lonely and unhappy. They have been to a school or a college and they find, in the towns, very little of the companionship to which they were accustomed. Most of their own people, the workers, are ignorant and not interested in reading or in intellectual matters. They

cannot buy many books of their own and they may not use the European library. Europeans seldom distinguish between uneducated and educated Bantu, and the men or women who have attained to a certain standard of European civilization are self-conscious and are easily hurt in their feelings by what they consider to be unjust or discourteous treatment. These educated Bantu have a hard fight to maintain and to improve their standard of living and culture, and they feel isolated from their own people and from the Europeans to whose standard of civilization they are aspiring.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE BANTU EMPLOYED ON MINES IN THE UNION

**T**HE mining industry of South Africa has been built up on a plentiful supply of cheap Bantu labour. Without that indispensable labour, the industry would not be nearly so important a source of wealth to the country. The number of Bantu at work on the various mines of South Africa differs from time to time and depends on the market demand for the mineral in question. At the end of 1936 there were on the Witwatersrand gold mines 310,000 Bantu miners and 36,000 Europeans. On the coal mines of the Transvaal, Free State, and Natal, and on the diamond mines and diggings, there are usually another 120,000 Bantu workers. Of the Bantu on the gold mines just over half come from the Union; about one-fifth come from the three Protectorates; about one-quarter from Portuguese East Africa; and the remainder from other African areas. Johannesburg is thus a labour centre for the Bantu from all over southern Africa.

The reason why so many of the mine-workers come from outside the Union is that the Bantu do not, as a rule, like the work on the mines and do not go there unless economic conditions force them—that is, unless they cannot get cash wages in other work or unless they cannot support themselves in the Reserves. For many years the mines were not allowed to recruit Bantu labour from countries north of the twenty-second parallel of south latitude. This was because the Bantu from those tropical areas could not stand the changed conditions, and died in great numbers. With the boom in gold-mining, the demand for labour has increased so greatly that the

mine-owners have been able to persuade the Government to relax this rule. They point out that medical research into such matters as feeding and treatment, and the improved conditions on the mines, have considerably reduced the risk in recruiting from further north. Various people have pointed out that if the mines can get unlimited labour from outside the Union, the wages of the Union Bantu will continue to be low.

There are three ways in which a man may get work on the mines. He can go to Johannesburg by himself and find work on any mine that needs labour, and for any length of time, from one to six months. Most of the Bantu, however, obtain work through one of the recruiting agencies. For the gold and coal mines in the Transvaal there are two big recruiting corporations of which all the mines are members. The one that recruits Union and Protectorate labour is the Native Recruiting Corporation, Ltd. It has its head-quarters in Johannesburg and branch offices in all the areas where it is likely to get labour, particularly in the Reserves and in the Protectorates. As will be seen presently, the labour force on the mines is not permanent, and there is a constant supply coming from the Reserves and the Protectorates. The agents are told from head-quarters how many labourers are required each month and they then try to persuade as many men as possible to come forward. In the Transkei the agents are usually the traders, and they receive a bonus of from £1 to £2 2s. for each recruit obtained. This system naturally makes the traders anxious to obtain recruits, and it is not unknown for traders to lend money to possible workers, so that they will be compelled to go to the mines in order to pay their debts. In some cases young men are persuaded to go without their parents' permission or knowledge.

There is another scheme, known as the Assisted Voluntary Scheme, which is more and more being used by the Bantu. Under this Scheme a man goes to the recruiting office in the Reserve where he lives, and, if he is accepted for the mines, he is given an advance of his rail fare plus £2, all of which will subsequently be deducted from his wages. The advantage of this scheme is that the worker now ranks as non-recruited labour and can choose to which mine he wants to go.

The Portuguese Government does not allow active recruiting in its territory, but the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, the second big recruiting corporation, has agents and stations in Portuguese East Africa, and those Bantu who want to go to the mines go to the nearest agent and are then passed on. Under the Mozambique Convention with the Union Government, the Portuguese Government limits the number who may go in any one year and makes certain stipulations as regards payment and length of service.

At the recruiting office in the Reserves or in the Protectorates the men are medically examined. Work on the mines is very hard and about 25 per cent. of those who apply are turned down as medically unfit for such work. Those who are accepted must sign a long and complicated contract in which the number of shifts to be worked and the amount of pay are stipulated. They do not really understand this contract and, in any case, most of them cannot read or write. But Bantu have been going to the mines for such a long time that by now the conditions are widely understood, and those who are going get all the information they want from those who have been. When the contract has been signed, the worker is put on a special labour train with hundreds of other workers; he is given rations for the journey and a blanket. About five of these



crowded trains reach Johannesburg every week. The supply of labour is more plentiful in times of drought or depression, and in January and February there will be more trains than usual, because these are the months when food is most scarce in the Reserves.

When the train arrives at Johannesburg the new recruits are taken to a central depot, where the terms of the contract are explained to them by an officer of the Native Affairs Department; here, too, they are medically examined, their clothes are fumigated and their finger-prints are taken. After that they are drafted to whatever mine requires them and they undergo a third medical examination. Then they are given a number and a pay-book and, after a short rest, their work on the mines begins. We must try to imagine the sensations of these Bantu who have been accustomed all their lives to pastoral conditions in the Reserves and are now plunged suddenly into a highly developed industry. The train journey in itself was a nerve-racking experience. Then comes the roar and bustle and traffic of a great city. Everything is strange and unlike anything the man has ever experienced before. Here he is no longer treated as a member of a village, but, with hundreds of strangers, as a number. Finally comes the alarming experience of being rushed down in a cage into the bowels of the earth to work hard and long, in cramped and awkward positions, at a job in which there is always danger from falling rock or from some accident connected with machinery. There is constant noise and shouting and everything must be done to time. Fortunately for the Bantu worker, he always finds men of his own race and tribe working on the mines, and this companionship helps him to get over some of his worst initial fears.

The contract under which labour is engaged on the gold mines varies. Voluntary labour may have contracts of

from one to six months. Recruited labour must stay for 270 shifts, which means, in practice, about eleven months. Portuguese labour is recruited for twelve months or more, but may not stay for longer than eighteen months at a time. As a rule, the miner will stay for about eleven months and then return to his home for a period of rest. The mines are anxious for those workers who have some experience to come back, so they offer small monthly bonuses to those who will return within six months. Having signed a contract, it is a crime for a Bantu worker to break it. About 5,000 to 6,000 per year desert and about half of these are caught and punished.

The Bantu worker underground has usually an eight-hour day. Working under a European 'boss', these miners do the heavy work of digging and shovelling and drilling. Under the Mines and Works Act, which will be described in another chapter, they may not do certain skilled work, such as blasting and engine-driving. No matter how skilled they become at mining, therefore, they are unable to reach the best-paid posts. One reason for this is that the European trade unions want to keep the best-paid jobs for Europeans, and are afraid that the Bantu will drive them out of the mining industry if they are allowed to do skilled work. Another reason that is often given is that the Bantu have not sufficient sense of responsibility to do work on which the lives of other people may depend. It should be noted, however, that in Northern Rhodesia Bantu miners are allowed to do blasting work, and in the Belgian Congo they become engine-drivers and do all kinds of engineering work without endangering the lives of the people working under them. In the Union, too, the Bantu do all kinds of responsible work in connexion with machinery.

The average cash wage of the Bantu miner is about

2s. a day. From this should be subtracted, however, the expenses he had in getting from his home to the mines. Sometimes this is as much as £5, which reduces his cash wage for the eleven months by about 3d. a day. In addition to his cash wage, he gets food and lodging, free medical attention, and a certain amount of free entertainment and social amenities. European wages on the mines are very much higher and the comparison can best be seen by saying that the average monthly wage of the Bantu worker is £1 17s. 6d., while that of the European is £31 7s. In thinking of the value of the wage, the risks involved in the work must be taken into account. Mining is an occupation subject to serious risks from accident and also to a disease known as 'miner's phthisis'. The Bantu do not come under the benefit of the Workmen's Compensation Act, but the mines pay them out small lump sums if they have an accident. These amounts are very much smaller than those paid to Europeans for similar accidents. If a Bantu miner has an accident that permanently prevents him from working, he may be given a lump sum compensation of £30. The mines are bound by law to compensate him if he gets phthisis, but, here again, the amount is very small. The mines try to reduce accidents by various safety devices, by having classes in first-aid, by showing warning films, and by broadcasting lectures. By these means the death-rate from accidents has been reduced to 2.05 per 1,000. The death-rate from disease is 6.79 per 1,000.<sup>1</sup> This means that about 2,500 Bantu workers lose their lives every year through mining. When we add the number of those who lose arms or legs or fingers, we realize that the risk attached to mining considerably reduces the value of the wage paid.

In most mines there is a system known as the deferred

<sup>1</sup> In 1936. It has since been slightly higher.

pay system. This is a voluntary system by which the miner receives only a part of his wage at the mines and the rest is paid out to him when he returns home. This has many advantages, and the chief one is that the worker is unable to waste his money in Johannesburg and thus to arrive home with nothing to show for his work. This frequently happens to those who have not deferred their pay. The gold mines now send about £18,000 a month to the homes of their Bantu workers, and the system is becoming more popular. With the Portuguese miners, the Portuguese Government makes it a condition that part of their wages must be paid out in Portuguese territory. One reason why so many Bantu workers do not make use of this scheme is that, according to them, their parents or relatives take all the money from them when they get home. The Basutos particularly do not much like the deferred pay system.

On the gold mines the Bantu workers are housed in compounds or barracks. There are, on the Witwatersrand, about sixty such compounds, in each of which there may be from 1,000 to 5,000 workers. The compound consists of a quadrangle of brick buildings. Inside these are rows and rows of cement bunks for sleeping; usually there are two layers of bunks. Each compound has its own kitchen, where food is prepared by Bantu cooks. The Government lays down by regulation the minimum amount of food that each worker must get and the mines themselves try to secure a balanced diet for their workers. The usual daily ration is: 24 oz. mealie meal, 6 oz. bread, 3 oz. peas or beans, 2 oz. peanuts or fat, 5 oz. vegetables,  $\frac{1}{8}$  oz. coffee or cocoa with sugar;  $3\frac{1}{4}$  lb. of meat with salt is given per week. This diet is much better than that enjoyed by most Bantu on farms or in the Reserves and when they return from the mines they are, normally, in

much better physical condition than when they left home. On the Kimberley mines the workers are given lodging, but buy their own food at the stores of the mining company. Here their cash wage is, of course, much higher than on the gold mines.

The compound system has as a result the separation of men from their families for periods of ten or eleven months at a time. This is bad for the men and for the families in the Reserves. A good deal of the agricultural work in the Reserves must be done by women and young boys, while the men on the mines are unable to lead healthy home lives. On the copper mines in Northern Rhodesia and the Belgian Congo the authorities encourage the mine-workers to bring their families with them and to build their own houses and gardens on mine property. This is much healthier, and it gives the mines a more constant and permanent labour supply, besides doing away with a good deal of the expense of recruiting. The mine-owners on the Witwatersrand say they are unable to do this, because the numbers they employ are too large and land is too expensive to use for laying out villages. On some of the Witwatersrand mines provision has been made for a small number of married men; but there is room for about 2,000 families only, and this is negligible in comparison with the total number employed.

The compounds on the Rand are controlled by compound managers with the assistance of Bantu policemen. A great deal of the happiness of the worker depends on the character of these men, with whom they come into daily contact, and the mines are careful whom they appoint, because they are anxious to have contented workers. The mines make a certain amount of provision for the leisure hours of their workers, and give a great deal of financial assistance to mission societies and other

welfare associations who work among the Bantu on the mines. There are night schools, regular cinema shows, athletic sports, first-aid classes, and concerts. There is also a good deal of gambling and dancing and beer-drinking, which leads to private or tribal fights. The mines usually keep the different tribes separate, but practically every week-end there is a tribal fight with more or less serious results. In spite of what the mine-owners do to provide social amusement for the workers, there is not enough to occupy their leisure time. Conditions are so different from the family and tribal life to which they were accustomed in the Reserves that many of the Bantu workers become wild and reckless in their behaviour. Their good manners deteriorate.

The Department for Native Affairs keeps administrative and judicial control over the Bantu on the mines. There is a Director of Native Labour for the whole of the Witwatersrand area and under him are three Commissioners and many inspectors and other officials. These officials visit the mines periodically and try petty cases; more serious cases go before the ordinary courts. Fines inflicted for petty offences, such as disobedience to instructions, may be deducted from the worker's wage.

On such days as they are free, the workers may obtain a pass and go into Johannesburg. Most of them make use of this and very often spend their wages on buying goods from the stores just outside the compounds. These stores give credit very easily, and, very often, at the end of his contract, a Bantu worker may find that he has to go on working in order to pay his debt to the store-keeper. If he does not go to the store, the Bantu miner will go to the slum areas of Johannesburg, where he may find a shebeen. These are illegal, but they make such big profits that they can easily afford to pay the fines that

are inflicted if they are caught. The beer-halls are run by Bantu women who, as a rule, sell kaffir beer that has been very much 'doctored'. These drinking and gambling dens are very bad for the young Bantu who come straight from the simple tribal life in the Reserves.

In spite of his contact with highly modern industrial methods, the Bantu on the mines cannot be said to have become detribalized to the same extent as the urban Bantu. On the mines tribal customs and traditions are much stronger than in the towns because the miner is there for a comparatively short period before he goes back to the Reserves. The urban Bantu is gradually getting to the stage where he knows no other home than the town in which he lives. Yet in many ways the mines have a more disintegrating effect on tribal life. The Bantu in the towns are painfully adapting themselves to a new civilization different from that in the Reserves. The mine-worker is unable to adapt himself in so short a time, and he usually picks up the evil rather than the good of European civilization. This he takes back with him to the Reserves. In estimating the value of the gold-mining industry to South Africa, we must not forget to take into account its devastating effect on Bantu life.

## CHAPTER X

### ADMINISTRATION AND LEGISLATION IN THE UNION

IN describing the existing conditions of the Bantu in South Africa, it was necessary constantly to refer to, without further description, certain of the laws by which they are governed. In South Africa there are a number of laws that apply solely or chiefly to the Bantu, and it will be convenient to give a brief description, in one chapter, of these laws. Before doing so, however, it is necessary to know something of the administrative machinery that was set up at the time of Union for carrying into effect legislation that specifically concerns the Bantu population.

#### *(a) Department of Native Affairs and the Native Affairs Act*

The various European governments that conquered and annexed Bantu territory in the nineteenth century almost always found it convenient to set up special administrative machinery for governing their new subjects. Usually this took the form of calling the Governor of the colony, or, in the case of the South African Republic, the State President, the Supreme or Paramount Chief of the Bantu and of giving him such powers of law-making as a Supreme Chief was supposed to have under Bantu law and custom. In the Cape Colony the Governor had all the powers necessary, but he was not called Supreme Chief because the Cape policy was to break down the powers of the Bantu chiefs. Each of the two



Republics and the two British Colonies had its own Department of Native Affairs and, with the exception of the Cape Colony, made large use of the Bantu chiefs and headmen in their administration. It should be noted that the European governments very frequently credited the Supreme Chief with far more power than he really had under Bantu custom. This was partly due to ignorance of what Bantu custom actually was and partly because it was convenient to have autocratic power concentrated in the hands of the Native Affairs Department. In normal Bantu political conditions the chief very seldom had autocratic powers, but was controlled by his council and by his tribe.

When Union was constituted in 1910, these principles of Bantu administration were preserved. Powers which were previously vested in the Governors were now vested in the Governor-General of the Union and, by a later Act, the position was clearly defined when he was called the Supreme Chief of the Bantu of Natal, the Transvaal, and the Orange Free State. It must, of course, be clearly understood that the Governor-General acts constitutionally according to the principles of responsible government and, therefore, only on the advice of his ministers. The Minister of Native Affairs is responsible before Parliament for the Department of Native Affairs.

The functions of the Department are considerably wider than those of other Departments of State. It has, unlike other Departments, to look after all the interests of the Bantu and, in the Reserves for example, it combines all the functions of government that are, for Europeans, split up into various single departments. In the Reserves it has to preserve law and order, promote education and agriculture, settle disputes according to Bantu custom, administer finances, regulate the occupation of land, collect

taxes, and, most important, make regulations governing all these various functions. In addition, the Department must administer a large number of Acts that deal specially with the Bantu population in European areas. It is understandable, therefore, that if the Department has to attend to a variety of things that would normally fall under separate Departments, special powers will have to be given by Parliament to the Minister of Native Affairs to make laws by regulation rather than by the usual procedure of legislation. This was done by the Native Administration Act of 1927 (and amendments) which was based on the experience of the pre-Union departments and on that of the Native Affairs Department since 1910.

This very important Act gives the Governor-General (in practice, the Minister of Native Affairs) very wide powers to make laws by proclamation for all Bantu areas. He has the right to alter any existing laws, such as the Natal Native Code; he may make a law applicable to one particular area only; he may alter the existing pass regulations; he may declare new tribal boundaries and order tribes or sections of tribes to remove from one area to another; generally, he may make laws for the order and good government of the people in Bantu areas. Proclamations under this Act have dealt with such subjects as irrigation; soil erosion; dipping of stock; the prohibition, in certain areas, of public meetings without the permission of the magistrate; the application of the principle of collective responsibility for stock theft or damage to dipping-tanks; and the limitation of the number of donkeys that may be kept in Bantu areas. Unless there is urgency, all proclamations must be published in the *Government Gazette* one month before coming into operation; also, all proclamations must be laid on the

Tables of both Houses of Parliament; and Parliament may, by resolution, alter or repeal any proclamation.

It will be seen, thus, that practically all the laws affecting the Reserves are made, not by Parliament, but by proclamation of the Governor-General. This form of government is very convenient because it removes a great deal of detailed and intricate legislation from the sphere of parliamentary control, where enough time could not be devoted to it, and places it in the hands of a Minister who has the advice of expert officials. Further, it is flexible and enables Government to differentiate between tribes that may be at different stages of development. The objections to it are that it places arbitrary power in the hands of the Department of Native Affairs, and such power is always liable to abuse.

The personnel of the Department of Native Affairs consists of a Secretary, an Under-Secretary, and a large number of other officials. Among these officials are the Chief Native Commissioners, Native Commissioners, and Assistant Native Commissioners, who are stationed in the Reserves or in European areas where there are large numbers of Bantu. Outside the Reserves the magistrate of the district, an official of the Department of Justice, is usually the Native Commissioner. There are also a number of special officials such as the Director of Native Agriculture, the Director of Native Labour on the Witwatersrand, and a number of Inspectors of Native Labour.

One other body must be mentioned in connexion with the Native Affairs Department. By the Native Affairs Act of 1920 a Native Affairs Commission was instituted to consist of three members. The duties of the Commission are to consider all proposed legislation concerning the Bantu, to travel through the country and to acquaint

itself with Bantu conditions, to conduct special investigations, and to advise the Government on all matters concerning the administration of the Bantu. The Commission must submit an annual report to the Governor-General and where it disagrees with the Minister regarding any proposal it has the right to lay its views before Parliament. In deciding how the money of the Native Development Account must be spent the Minister must consult the Native Affairs Commission.

### *(b) Taxation*

At the time of union each province had its own system of taxing the Bantu and this was kept up till 1922, when Parliament passed an Act by which Provincial Councils were prevented from taxing them. In 1925 the Natives Taxation and Development Act was passed placing the direct taxation of the Bantu people throughout the Union on a uniform footing. By this Act there was instituted a General Tax, usually called the Poll Tax, of £1 per year payable by every adult male Bantu, and, in addition, a Local Tax of 10s. per year payable in the Reserves only by every male occupier of a hut, unless he holds land under the quit-rent system in the Transkei. Those Bantu men who have sufficient income to pay income tax are exempt from the General Tax. An adult male Bantu means a male between the ages of eighteen and sixty-five, and magistrates may grant exemptions to men who are physically unable to work or who are too poor to pay. The General Tax is payable by the 1st of January in each year, and after the 30th of June any one who has not paid is liable to arrest. The tax receipt must always be carried by the taxpayer, because the police have powers to demand the receipt and failure to produce it leads to

arrest. The usual punishment for having failed to pay the Poll Tax is a 5s. fine or seven days' imprisonment. After that the tax is still owing, but the man may not be punished a second time for the same offence. The authorities may, however, seize his goods and sell them in order to get the money, but this is never done. The General Tax probably represents about 16 per cent. of the cash income of the average Bantu taxpayer and he is taxed no matter how small his income is. For Europeans income tax is about 5 per cent. of the cash income, but it is payable only on incomes of more than £300 per year. As a rule there are about 60,000 arrests a year on account of failure to pay tax and a certain number of Bantu manage to escape paying for a number of years. All other taxation, such as Customs duties, the tax on cigarettes, licences, and fees, is paid by both European and Bantu, but it naturally constitutes a greater proportion of Bantu income than it does of European income.

The Natives Taxation and Development Act provided that a special account, called the Native Development Account,<sup>1</sup> should be kept to be administered by the Minister of Native Affairs in consultation with the Native Affairs Commission. The proceeds of the Local Tax are given to the area where it is raised and are spent there. Of the General Tax two-fifths go into the general revenue of the Union and three-fifths go to the Native Development Account. Into this account the Government further pays a lump sum of £340,000 a year, and the fund is then responsible for financing Bantu education, agriculture, and Bantu welfare generally. The annual revenue from the General Tax is about £1,000,000, so that the Development Fund has at its disposal about

<sup>1</sup> The Native Development Account is now merged in The Native Trust Fund. *See* p. 77.

£900,000 per year. Most of this, as will be explained in a later chapter, goes for education.

It should be explained why the Government grants £340,000 a year to the Native Development Account. Up till 1922 the Provincial Councils were responsible for Bantu education and taxed them for that purpose. When, in that year, Parliament stopped provincial taxation of the Bantu, it decided to grant from general revenue, for Bantu education, the amount that was spent in that year by the four provinces. That amount was £340,000. Since then, of course, the needs of Bantu education have greatly increased.

### *(c) Acts regulating Bantu Labour*

Ever since the Bantu began to take service with the Europeans, the various governments in South Africa have passed laws to give the employers effective control over their servants. In Natal in 1850, the Cape in 1856, the Transvaal in 1880, and the Orange Free State in 1904, laws were passed that are known as 'masters and servants laws'. These laws apply chiefly to farm labourers and to domestic servants, because, when they were passed, there were practically no industries in South Africa. Their chief aim is to make it possible for masters to prosecute their servants in a criminal court for a breach of contract. Such a breach may be insubordination, refusal to carry out a specified piece of work, absence without leave, carelessness when in charge of stock, and a variety of other things. Among Europeans breach of contract is a civil and not a criminal offence. Contracts of less than one year need not, under these laws, be made in writing, and the absence of a written contract is a very serious cause of dispute between masters and servants and probably leads

to most of the many cases that now come before the courts. Most of these cases occur on the farms. In the towns they are frequently settled out of court by the sympathetic handling of a location manager.

One of the results of these laws is that the Bantu may not organize a strike, because absence from work is a criminal offence. This applies only, of course, to longer contracts. Day labourers and workers on weekly contracts could, of course, strike at the end of their period; but for contracts of longer than that it is, in practice, impossible for Bantu workers to combine and to use the strike weapon that European trade unions have found so effective in bettering their conditions of work.

Under the Masters and Servants Acts the masters also have certain obligations. They have to carry out the terms of the contract as regards wages, grazing land, arable land, and food. If they break the contract it is a civil offence. In practice, however, the Bantu hardly ever take their employers to court for breach of contract. Either they are ignorant of the law, or else, in the absence of a written contract, they are afraid that the master's word will be taken before theirs.

The relations between the employer and the worker in such industries as mining are regulated by the Native Labour Regulation Act of 1911. By this act the Director of Native Labour controls the issue of recruiting licences to agents, he controls the conditions under which Bantu workers are employed, fed and housed, and he may, in certain circumstances, cancel contracts. Under this act, as with the masters and servants laws, breach of contract is a criminal offence. The Native Labour Regulation Act protects the worker very much more than the Masters and Servants Acts do.

The Labour Service Contract Act of 1932 amended, for

the Transvaal and Natal, the existing laws in such a way as to prevent the Bantu from squatting on undeveloped land and to compel them to enter into contracts of service with European farmers. It also allows the magistrate to sentence a servant to a whipping for the breach of a contract.

#### (d) *Pass Laws*

Before Union, pass laws existed in the Orange Free State, the Transvaal, and Natal. In the Cape Colony there were no pass laws, except in the Transkei, where any Bantu entering or leaving the Transkei had to be in possession of a pass. The original object of the pass laws was to be able to control the movements of Bantu and to protect farmers against vagrants who might steal stock or do other damage. Since every male Bantu had to be able to produce a pass when requested, the authorities were better able to detect unauthorized wandering. When the Bantu began to come to the towns, and especially to the industrial areas, the pass system was extended and was used as a method of detecting desertion, identifying Bantu who had become lost, and tracing the families of men who died. Practically all these laws are still in force to-day, and they considerably restrict the movement of the Bantu and are bitterly resented by them.

A pass is a piece of paper on which a man's employer or a Government official states that he has permission to go from one place to another. If he cannot produce his pass when requested to do so by a police official, he is arrested and he may be fined or sent to prison, since this is a criminal offence. Before a man may take a railway ticket he must produce his pass.

Various attempts have been made to produce some



order into the pass system, which has become very complicated owing to the fact that so many different authorities made pass laws. In Johannesburg, for example, a Bantu male must be in possession of four different passes and the absence of any one may cause his arrest. An Inter-Departmental Committee reported to the Government in 1920 advocating a very much simplified pass law for the whole of the Union with the exception of the Cape Province. The Native Economic Commission recommended in 1932 that the report of this Committee should be acted on, and several members of the Commission advocated that the pass laws had served their purpose and could now safely be abolished. So far, however, nothing has been done to act on the recommendations of these two Government commissions.

Those who favour the pass laws say that they are a means of preventing crime and desertion, and those who oppose them say that in the Cape Province, where there are no pass laws, there is not more crime than in the other Provinces. In fact, there are fewer convictions under the masters and servants laws in the Cape than in the Transvaal. There were over 60,000 convictions under the pass laws in 1936, and those who favour their abolition maintain that this is a needlessly expensive way of keeping law and order and that the police force could be much better employed. Finally, they maintain, the fact that the lack of a pass is a criminal offence tends to make criminals of otherwise law-abiding people.

We must distinguish between the ordinary pass system which restricts the movement of men from one place to another and the night pass system which is in force in all towns. By these pass regulations, no Bantu male may be in the European quarter of the town during certain

specified hours of the night (usually 10 p.m. to 4 a.m.) without a pass from his employer. In the Cape Province this is the rule, too, except that it does not apply to Bantu who are registered parliamentary voters. It should be noted, too, that Europeans may not enter the Bantu township without a permit.

The Government may grant exemption from the operation of the pass laws to certain people, such as teachers, ministers, court interpreters, and other professional men. Of course, this means carrying a letter of exemption instead of a pass and, unless the man is well known locally, he may still be stopped and asked to produce his exemption certificate.

(e) *'Colour Bar' Act*

There still exists a great deal of confusion in the minds of most people about the 'Colour Bar' Act. The real name of this Act is the Mines and Works Amendment Act of 1926. In 1911 an act known as the Mines and Works Act gave the Government power to make regulations regarding the granting of certificates of competency in certain skilled occupations in mining and engineering works generally. In 1923 the Government used this power to make regulations by which Europeans only could obtain these certificates of competency and the courts declared these regulations *ultra vires*. In 1926, under very strong pressure from the trade unions, Parliament rectified this by passing the amending Act, which was nicknamed the 'Colour Bar' Act. Under this, new regulations were made by which certificates in such occupations as blasting, engine-driving, and other skilled mechanical work might be granted to Europeans, Cape coloured, Mauritius creoles, and St. Helena persons, but

not to Bantu. So far the Act has been applied to the mines only.

In South Africa there is, of course, a good deal of colour bar legislation, because any laws that distinguish between people because of their colour may be called 'colour bar laws'. Such laws as the pass laws, for example, may be called 'colour bar laws'. But when people speak about the colour bar in South Africa they are usually thinking about those laws and customs that restrict the Bantu in an economic sense. The trade unions, for example, for the most part enforce the colour bar in their unions, having secured its inclusion in the Industrial Conciliation Act, because they want to ensure that the jobs with high wages are reserved for European skilled workers. When the Bantu think about the colour bar they think chiefly of laws and policies which prevent them, no matter what skill they may acquire, from obtaining good jobs in skilled occupations. The Economic and Wage Commission in 1925 condemned colour bar legislation in industry as uneconomic and bad for the country. More recently, in 1935, the Industrial Legislation Commission did the same. The Native Economic Commission of 1932 condemned colour bar legislation on social and political, rather than on economic, grounds, though two of its members dissociated themselves from this view.

#### (f) *Riotous Assemblies Act*

The Riotous Assemblies (Amendment) Act was passed in 1930 and its object was to give the Government more power than the existing laws allowed in checking what are called 'agitationists', that is, people who try to make the Bantu more conscious of the disabilities under which

they live and who urge them to object to such conditions. The Act gives the Minister very wide powers. If he thinks that a proposed public meeting is likely to endanger the good feeling between the European population and the rest of the inhabitants of South Africa, he may prohibit such a meeting; he may prevent any particular person, who he thinks may cause ill-feeling, from attending such a meeting; he may even order any person who, in his opinion, may endanger good-feeling, to live somewhere else or, if he was born outside of South Africa, he may deport him. He may prohibit the publication and distribution of reading matter that may have a bad effect on the relations between Bantu and European. Although this Act applies equally to Europeans and to Bantu, it was really aimed at Bantu leaders who might agitate too violently against European laws. People who objected to the Act said that the ordinary laws of the land gave the Minister quite enough power to deal with riotous assemblies and that so much arbitrary power in the hands of the Executive was always dangerous.

#### (g) *Stock-theft Laws*

These laws apply to Europeans as well as to Bantu, but the number of Europeans convicted under them is negligible. About 2 per cent. of the convictions are against Europeans and the remainder against non-Europeans, mostly Bantu. About 90 per cent. of the stock stolen is small stock, such as sheep; the balance consists of horses, donkeys, mules, and cattle. These laws provide very severe penalties, six months, a year, or more, in prison for the theft of stock of any kind. The criminal law of the country allows a policeman to arrest a man

without a warrant in the case of stock theft if he is reasonably sure that a theft has been committed. This provision leads to a number of wrongful arrests. The heavy punishment in the case of stock theft is out of proportion to the value of the goods stolen. A man is much more severely punished for stealing a sheep valued at 10s. than for stealing £10. This is because the stock-theft laws are really an example of what is known as class legislation, that is, legislation made by one particular class in order to protect its property or interests against another class. The famous game laws in England and France were examples of this kind of legislation, and so were the stock-theft laws of those countries. There was a time in England, just more than a hundred years ago, when it was literally true that 'you might as well hang for a sheep as for a lamb'.

#### *(h) Industrial Legislation*

There are two Acts that deal with the question of wages and conditions of labour in industries. The Industrial Conciliation Act provides machinery whereby employers and employees can settle disputes by means of Industrial Councils without necessarily resorting to strikes and lock-outs. The Act excludes from its operation all pass-bearing Bantu, which means that only the Bantu of the Cape Province may benefit by the Act. It is important in the other provinces, however, for the following reason. If an Industrial Council reports to the Minister that it has reached an agreement on the question of wages, but that such an agreement would not work if Bantu workers were used in the industry at the agreed rates, the Minister may ask the Council to recommend a lower scale of wages

to apply to the Bantu for that industry. They have thus had their wages fixed for them by an Industrial Council on which they had no representation. The Industrial Conciliation Act is really intended for the organized skilled industries.

In order to provide for unorganized European and Bantu labour, the Wage Act was passed in 1925. This establishes a Wage Board of three members whose business it is to investigate, and report to the Minister on, the conditions in industries where the workers are not organized. The Wage Board comes into operation when the Minister instructs it to investigate an industry or when employers or employees in that industry make an application for an investigation. The Board reports to the Minister, who may then make a wage determination. The Act does not apply to domestic servants or to agricultural labourers or to government employees.

### *(i) The Urban Areas Act*

The Urban Areas Act of 1923, and subsequent amendments, was made in order to provide for improved conditions and control of the Bantu, who, in steadily increasing numbers, were migrating to the European towns. Before that time there were various Acts that governed the lives of urban Bantu, but they were inadequate to deal with the growing problem. The Act of 1923 adopted what was already a recognized principle, that Bantu and European settlements should be separate. Further, it placed the full responsibility for housing and for administration on the shoulders of the local authority or municipality. This authority is exercised subject to the control of the Minister of Native Affairs. The urban

authority must set aside land for a location, appoint officials to manage the location, select, or arrange to have elected, a Native Advisory Board; it must keep a separate Native Revenue Account, and money raised by taxation in the location may not be used for the benefit of the European inhabitants. All regulations which the local authority may make, including the questions of revenue and expenditure, are subject to the approval of the Minister of Native Affairs.

The Act further provides for regulations to be made regarding the manufacture and sale of kaffir beer, curfew regulations, permits to live in the location, and permits to look for work. It empowers the local authority to make regulations prohibiting more Bantu from entering the location and for removing those who have no employment or who are 'idle and dissolute'. The municipality may allow trading by Bantu in the locations. So far this has not been done in the Orange Free State.

In 1937 further amendments were made in the Urban Areas Act, which gave the local authorities and the Government still further powers to remove Bantu who are unemployed. These amendments were partly due to an increasing demand for farm labour and to the belief that many of the town Bantu were unemployed and should be made to work. Municipalities are now compelled to take a census of the Bantu population in their area every two years and to estimate the labour requirements of the town for the coming two years. The surplus unemployed population may then be removed. These amendments tend to regard the locations as temporary residences where such Bantu labour as is required by the European population may live. This is a departure from the original Act, which recognized that locations were really permanent Bantu townships.

(j) *The Native Trust and Land Act*

It was pointed out in a previous chapter that, by the Land Act of 1913, Parliament laid down the policy of separate areas for European and for Bantu occupation. Various attempts to set aside more land for Bantu occupation failed, but in 1936 Parliament passed the Native Trust and Land Act. By this Act, in the first place, a South African Native Trust is established. The Governor-General, who may delegate his powers to the Minister of Native Affairs, is the Trustee, and he may appoint in each Province an Advisory Board consisting of an officer of the Native Affairs Department and two other people, one of whom may be Bantu. The functions of the Trust are to acquire land for Bantu settlement, to develop such land, to promote agriculture in Bantu areas, and, generally, to advance the material, moral, and social well-being of the Bantu. To do all this there is a Trust Fund, and it will get money from the sale or renting of land, from various fees and fines, and, lastly, from grants made by the Union Parliament.

The principle of a Native Trust is an old one, having been established in Natal in 1860. The idea was that if tribal lands were invested in a Trust they would be more secure and less likely to be alienated from the Bantu tribe in question. Also, the Trust could have a Fund which would be able to develop the land more efficiently than a number of individual Bantu would. The Natal Native Trust and the Zululand Native Trust are now merged in the South African Native Trust.

The second object of the Act is to limit the amount of land that the Trust may buy or that individual Bantu or small groups of Bantu may buy. The limit mentioned in the Act is  $7\frac{1}{4}$  million morgen of land. This land will al-



be adjacent to existing Reserves<sup>1</sup> and on some of it Bantu are already living. The money of the Trust Fund will to begin with, be largely spent on buying new land from its present European owners. The land so bought will become, for practical purposes, Reserves where Europeans may not own land. When the full  $7\frac{1}{4}$  million morgen have been bought, the Bantu will have about 13 per cent. of the surface of the Union as land where they alone may acquire rights of ownership.

The Act also deals very fully with Bantu on European farms. It limits the number of labour-tenants that any European farmer may have and makes them subject to the masters and servants laws. A labour-tenant is one who gives his services in exchange for the right to occupy land on a farm, and there are a great many labour-tenants in the Transvaal and Natal. In those provinces, too, there are a large number of squatters who occupy land and pay a small rent to the owner, but who do not give service in exchange for land. The Act forbids the registration of new squatters and lays down a scale of fees to be paid by the owner of the farm for every registered squatter at the time the Act was passed. These fees are heavy and they are obviously designed to do away with squatting altogether. In future, therefore, only those Bantu who are registered as servants or as labour-tenants on farms, or who are registered as employed in urban areas, may live outside of the Bantu Reserves.

### (k) *The Representation of Natives Act*

When the old Cape Colony, in 1853, was granted representative government, Europeans and non-European

<sup>1</sup> See Map at end of book.

alike were allowed to vote.<sup>1</sup> In the Transvaal and Orange Free State Republics, on the other hand, only Europeans could become citizens. In Natal non-Europeans were allowed to have their names on the voters' roll, but on such conditions that very few of them were ever enfranchised. When Union was established, it was decided that the franchise laws as they were should continue in force after Union and that the vote of the Bantu in the Cape Province could be removed or altered only by a two-thirds majority of both Houses of Parliament. The Bantu in the northern provinces were thus unrepresented in the Union Parliament except for the fact that four of the Senators appointed by the Government were supposed to have a knowledge of the needs of the Bantu. Usually, however, these appointments were made on a party-political basis without reference to the interests of the Bantu population.

In 1925 the Government brought forward a bill which proposed to take away the vote from the Bantu in the Cape (there were about 12,000 of them) and to let all the Bantu of the Union elect some Members of Parliament. These Members were not to have the full right of ordinary Members. This bill, after much discussion, was finally put to the vote of both Houses of Parliament in 1929, but it failed to secure the necessary two-thirds majority. In 1936 a new bill was introduced and finally passed as the Representation of Natives Act.

By this Act the Bantu voters of the Cape retain their vote, but on a separate register. They elect three European Members of Parliament and three members of the Cape Provincial Council. In the second place, all the Bantu of the Union elect four Senators. For the purpose

<sup>1</sup> There were, however, property qualifications which excluded the large majority of the Bantu.

of this election, the country is divided into four electoral areas: Natal, the Transvaal and Free State as one, the Transkeian Territories, and the Cape Province minus the Transkeian Territories. The Senator for the Transkei is elected by the Transkeian Territories General Council. For the other areas they are elected, not directly by the Bantu taxpayers, but by an Electoral College which consists of recognized chiefs, Native Advisory Boards, Location Boards, Reserve Boards of Management, and Bantu elected by taxpayers on European farms. Each of these is called an electoral unit and the units make up the Electoral College of the area. Each unit has as many votes as there are taxpayers in the area of that unit. Thus a chief might have 6,000 votes, or a Native Advisory Board in a town 5,000. The first elections under this Act were held in 1937.

The Act also provides for a Natives' Representative Council, which consists of twenty-two members. Of these the Chairman is the Secretary of Native Affairs and the five Chief Native Commissioners are *ex officio* members. The Government appoints four Bantu members and the remaining twelve are elected in much the same way as the Senators are—three for each electoral area. The Council is to meet once a year and its functions are advisory. Any bills affecting the Bantu population which the Government intends introducing into Parliament must first be sent to the Council for its opinion and advice. The Government may ask the Council to discuss any matter affecting Bantu interests. The Minister of Finance must consult the Council on any financial measure affecting the Bantu and also on the money to be spent from the South African Native Trust Fund. The Council may also recommend legislation to Parliament or to Provincial Councils. The

first elections for the Natives Representative Council also took place in 1937.

*(1) The Jury System*

In South Africa Europeans only may sit on juries, and in 1927 it was felt by the Government that the number of cases in which justice miscarried because of colour prejudice was increasing. The criminal law was accordingly amended in that year and, again, in 1935, so that the accused person may now choose whether he wishes to be tried by a judge and jury or by a judge without jury. In certain cases in which European and non-European are involved, the Attorney-General may direct that the trial shall take place without a jury and in some of these cases where there is no jury the judge must appoint two assessors to sit with him.

## CHAPTER XI

### RELIGION AND EDUCATION OF THE BANTU IN THE UNION

**I**N 1560 Father Gonzalo da Silveira landed at Sofala as the first Christian missionary to southern Africa. Almost 200 years later, in 1737, Georg Schmidt landed at Cape Town to establish a mission station on behalf of the Moravian Mission Society. But it was not until the nineteenth century that mission societies began to play a really important part in the march of European civilization in Africa. Since then the influence of the missionaries has been uninterrupted and immense. Beginning from the southern point of Africa, they pushed northwards, usually in advance of the rest of European civilization. They were the pioneers of that civilization. They opened up vast tracts of new country; they explored new rivers and lakes; they discovered tribes of whose existence no one had dreamt. They built mission stations that became centres of the Christian religion and of European culture. They reduced Bantu languages to writing; they were the pioneers in the education of the Bantu. To-day, the churches in Bantu locations, the mission stations dotted all over the country, the schools in locations and on mission stations, the social work done in towns, the mission hospitals, all bear witness to the work which was done, and is being done, in South Africa and in Southern Rhodesia, not to mention the rest of Africa, by mission societies of the various Christian Churches. Millions of pounds have been spent in the past and hundreds of thousands are spent every year by these societies. Many

noble lives have been sacrificed in the cause of the mission to the Bantu.

It is impossible to estimate with any degree of accuracy the effect on present-day Bantu life in southern Africa of this tremendous missionary effort. A mere statement of the number of Christian Bantu, the number of missionaries actually working to-day, or the annual expenditure on mission work, is no real measure of the influence exerted by mission societies. Such facts serve only as a stimulus to the imagination.

The primary object of mission societies has always been to preach the Christian religion. The missionaries very soon came up against great difficulties in this field. The Christian religion and Western European civilization are so interwoven that it is difficult to separate them. So, too, are the primitive Bantu religions and Bantu social ideas. In attacking Bantu heathenism with the instruments of religion and civilization, the missionaries also attacked Bantu social institutions and thus set up very serious conflicts in the minds of the Bantu. Converts to Christianity were called upon to give up customs which often meant that they had to renounce their tribal and family obligations. Among many Bantu tribes in southern Africa and elsewhere, for example, it is customary for a man to take over the wife and children of a brother who dies. This is a very sound institution according to Bantu social ideas, as it provides a means of caring for widows and orphans. According to Christian ideas, however, a man may not have more than one wife. Here, then, Christian ideals clash with Bantu family duties. There are many more examples of this conflict between two social systems, and it is here that the mission societies have been one of the greatest agencies in breaking up tribal life. To-day many missionaries are alive to the

problems created by this conflict and deal with them sympathetically, often trying to adapt Christian ideas to Bantu institutions. But just as in the past the impact of a money economy on a subsistence economy had very serious effects on tribal institutions, so the impact of Christianity on Bantu society has had a disintegrating effect on tribal life. It is natural that in the process good as well as evil customs were weakened.

In the early days of missionary enterprise, mission societies frequently operated in territory which was not yet under European control. After annexation, friction often arose with the Government, whose chief concern was to exploit the conquered territory and to maintain law and order. These objects were often achieved with harshness and injustice to the Bantu, and missionary policy clashed with Government policy on these points. The Government accused the missionaries of interfering with matters that did not concern them, and the missionaries felt that everything that affected the welfare of the Bantu was their concern. There was also competition and friction between the various mission societies. This resulted in overlapping and, consequently, wasted effort. Further, it was very confusing to the Bantu who were unable to understand the differences in religious doctrine. To-day the missionaries have learnt the value of co-operation through General Missionary Councils and through conferences, and governments have learnt the value of working through mission societies. Even now many people resent what they call interference in politics on the part of the missionaries, and the number of different societies still confuse the Bantu. But the position has greatly improved.

Missionaries soon found that, though their main object was to preach the Gospel, very many secondary

objects resulted from this. There was the question of recurrent hunger with which a subsistence economy is always faced, and missionaries had to tackle that problem on their own stations and among the tribes in their area. They introduced better tools and improved methods of farming; they experimented with new crops; they built dams and irrigation furrows; they erected windmills. Then there were questions of building houses and churches and hospitals, of supplying the medical needs of the Bantu so as to counteract superstition, of constructing roads, of fencing, of making furniture. To do all these things, the missionaries had to train Bantu labour. To-day mission stations are very much more than places where Christianity is preached. They are places where skilled Bantu artisans are trained and work, where scientific agriculture is carried on, where scientific medicine is practised, and where all kinds of theoretical and practical subjects are taught. In the Reserves these mission stations are as different from the surrounding primitive Bantu villages as a big industrial city is from a country village.

It is not only in the Reserves that missionaries influence Bantu life. In the towns and on the mines of southern Africa the various churches of mission societies are more than places of worship. They are social centres for all kinds of civilizing activities. There, as in the Reserves, the Bantu are brought into contact with some of the best aspects of European civilization and culture and, while the missionaries have not got to do so much engineering, agricultural, or carpentering work as in the Reserves, they are often the main force behind social welfare work and behind the kind of work that is helping the urban Bantu to adapt himself to European standards of life.

Apart from the teaching of religion, the most important aspect of mission work is education. In the wider sense



of the term, all that has been mentioned above is educational, and the effect of training the Bantu in habits of skilled industry and accustoming them to European standards of life is very great. But education is here taken in its narrower sense of school education. From the earliest days of missionary effort in southern Africa, missionaries have been aware of the immense importance of schools. The early governments were not interested in the education of the Bantu and were, in any case, not prepared to spend money on it. Thus it came about that the mission societies were the first founders of schools, just as, in Europe, the first schools were established and controlled by the Churches. When the various governments did begin to take an interest, they contented themselves for the most part with giving small subsidies to the mission societies that were already doing the work. That is still the case to-day with the overwhelming majority of Bantu schools in southern Africa; but, of recent years, governments have become more alive to their responsibilities in this matter and are not only paying larger subsidies, but are taking a much more active part in directing policy and in controlling administration.

In the early days the kind of education given on mission stations depended entirely on the missionary and on his knowledge and abilities as teacher. He used his own syllabus and his own methods, often with rather startling results. As soon as the Government began to give financial aid, it began to take a hand in policy and thus there has grown up a system by which a Government department is in charge of Bantu education and, with the advice of missionaries, prescribes the curriculum and supervises the work. In each of the provinces of the Union the responsibility for Bantu education rests with the Provincial Council. The Director of Education is the principal

administrative officer, and he is assisted by a Chief Inspector of Native Schools. A special branch of the Education Department deals with Bantu schools. In each Province there is an Advisory Board for Native Education on which the chief mission societies engaged in educational work are represented. In the Cape Province the inspectors of schools inspect all schools, Bantu as well as European, but in the other provinces there are special staffs of European inspectors who devote all their attention to Bantu schools. In addition to these, each Department employs a staff of trained Bantu to assist the inspectors. In 1936 a very important Inter-Departmental Committee on Native Education recommended that in future all Bantu Education should come under the Minister for Education of the Union Government and that there should be a National Board to advise him, with Provincial Boards for local administration. There would also be a Union Director of Native Education. It is not yet known whether the Government intends acting on this recommendation.

Each individual school is controlled, under the Education Department, by a manager, who is usually a missionary. In a number of amalgamated schools, that is, schools formed by co-operation of different mission societies, the management is in the hands of an executive of the school committee, which represents both the mission societies and the parents. The work of the managers is to recommend teachers for appointment or dismissal, to be responsible for the religious and moral instruction of the children, and to exercise a general supervision over the schools under their management.

There are about 8,000 Bantu teachers in the Union and of these 7,500 teach in primary schools. About 70 per cent. of the primary school teachers are qualified, which

means that they have passed Standard VII or the Junior Certificate Examination and have taken a two or three years' teachers' course after that. In the secondary schools only fourteen are qualified, having a degree and a professional certificate. In the secondary and teacher-training schools there are more European than Bantu teachers. In primary schools the salaries for men vary between £42, rising to £60 a year, and £78, rising to £120 a year, depending on the degree of qualification. Unqualified teachers get £36 a year and the scale for women teachers is lower than for men. In the secondary and training schools the salaries vary from £90, rising to £180, and £180, rising to £306 a year, depending on qualifications. Here, too, the scales are lower for women. Heads of schools get small additional allowances, the maximum being £24 a year, and in the Cape Province and Natal teachers living in towns receive small cost-of-living allowances. With small exceptions in Natal and the Cape Province, Bantu teachers have no pension rights.

There are four kinds of school: primary, secondary, teacher-training and industrial. According to a Government report for 1935-6, there were then 3,254 primary schools with about 332,000 children; there were 20 secondary schools with 2,273 pupils; 36 industrial schools with 1,164 pupils; and 26 teacher-training schools with 3,540 pupils. Education is not compulsory for the Bantu and it should be noted that the total number at school is about 20 per cent. of the number of Bantu children of school-going age. Even if the extra 80 per cent. wanted to go to school, there would not be accommodation for them. Of the children in primary schools, about 75 per cent. are in Standard II and below; only about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. are in Standard VI.

In the primary schools, the course lasts eight years—

two sub-standards and six standards; a large percentage does not complete this course. The curriculum consists of the usual school subjects and religious instruction, a Bantu language, one of the official languages of the Union (in the Free State both are required), manual training, such as handicrafts, needlework and gardening, Nature study, hygiene, music, drill, and games. This curriculum can be carried out in the larger schools only, since in a great number of the single-teacher schools the lack of equipment and of training make it impossible for the teacher to do all this. It must be remembered that the standard of education is not the same as for Europeans. It is probably correct to say that a Bantu child in Standard III is about two years older than a European child in the same standard and that the Bantu Standard III is about equivalent to the European Standard I. The secondary schools prepare pupils for the Junior Certificate and Matriculation examinations of South Africa, and the courses are the same as those followed in European schools. The industrial and teacher-training schools follow the European model.

A very important question in Bantu education is whether the courses should be the same as for European children. Some people argue that under the economic and social system of South Africa the needs, in later life, of the Bantu are different from the European, and that the curriculum should therefore be different. Naturally, all are agreed that what are called 'the three R's' should be taught. Those who advocate a different curriculum want to lay much greater stress on handwork for boys and domestic service training for girls. The opponents of this view say that, ultimately the aims of education are the same for all people and that it is a dangerous principle to differentiate. In actual practice the systems are different

in the primary schools, because European and Bantu children are brought up in such different environments that the same courses cannot be applied. In the secondary school, however, the courses are the same, since both write the same examinations. On the question of medium of instruction most people are now agreed that this should be a Bantu language until about Standard IV and the old days when Bantu children recited meaningless English sentences are now past. The Bantu themselves are much opposed to having their education system different from that of the Europeans. They are afraid they will be given an inferior course and, also, they naturally connect European education with better economic conditions.

In the Cape Province, education for the Bantu is free up to the secondary stage. In the other provinces school fees are charged. For Europeans, both primary and secondary education is free throughout the Union. The mission societies must provide their own buildings. Often these are churches or disused churches and not at all suitable for school use. In Natal, the Transvaal, and the Orange Free State all furniture and school equipment must be provided from mission funds and school fees; in the Cape Province these things are provided by the Education Department. Pupils and teachers must provide their own books, except in the Cape Province, where the Department pays half the cost of books for the pupils and provides books for the teachers. The Inter-Departmental Committee on Native Education has recommended that school fees for primary schools be abolished, that the Government provide all school equipment and advance money for school buildings, and that half the cost of school books be paid by the Government.

Although the Provincial Administrations control Bantu education, it is from the Union Government that the

funds come. Actually the money comes from the Native Development Fund and is paid in a block grant to the different Education Departments. We saw in a previous chapter that the amount paid by the Government into the Development Account was based on the expenditure on Bantu education in 1922. The result is that Bantu education has to manage on very little money and expansion is almost impossible. The average amount available for Bantu pupils is just over £2 per pupil per year; for Europeans it is about £18 per year. With such meagre funds, it is to be expected that school buildings and equipment will be poor and salary scales low. There are practically no library facilities and very few of the aids to education with which a modern school is now equipped—aids such as good maps, classroom mathematical instruments, science apparatus, and reference books. In spite of all these difficulties, the educational progress in the last ten or twenty years has been remarkable.

In 1880 Dr. Stewart, the head of Lovedale Institute, spoke about the ultimate need for a place where the Bantu could enjoy a university education. In 1916 this object was achieved when General Botha, then Prime Minister of the Union, opened the South African Native College at Fort Hare, near to Lovedale in the Eastern Province. This college is a constituent college of the University of South Africa and it accepts Indian and coloured students as well as Bantu. The courses are the same as for the University of South Africa and the students write exactly the same examinations. There are now about 170 students, and though, like all university institutions, the College lacks funds for development, it is well-equipped both on the arts and on the science side and is staffed by a group of qualified men and women, both European and Bantu. So far about sixty students have obtained degrees of the

University of South Africa, and in 1937 the University conferred an honorary doctor's degree on Rev. John Dube of Natal, the first Bantu to be honoured in this way.

Before Fort Hare was established, a small number of Bantu went to England and America to take university courses, and as a rule those who wish to take medical degrees still do so. Fort Hare is not equipped as a medical school, and though a few non-European students are taking the medical courses at the University of Cape Town and at the Witwatersrand University, they prefer, if they can possibly manage it, to go overseas. Recently the Government has begun a scheme whereby medical aids can be trained at Fort Hare to do medical work in the Reserves.

In estimating some of the results of education on the Bantu people, we must bear the facts clearly in mind. In England education for the mass of the population began in 1870 and yet there is not to-day room in English secondary schools for all those who want to go. For the Bantu education for the mass has not yet begun, since only 20 per cent. of the children of a school-going age are at school. Further, when education in England did begin it started with a written language and an organized printing press. The Bantu had, until comparatively recent years, no written language and only very small mission printing presses. The vast mass of the population is thus still illiterate. The achievements of education must, therefore, be measured against this background. To-day there are two important printing presses—at Lovedale and at Morija in Basutoland—and a number of smaller ones. In one year the Lovedale Press published and sold 73,000 books, mostly in Bantu languages, besides many pamphlets and magazines. There are about fifteen Bantu

newspapers in South Africa. One of them, the *Imvo Zabantsundu* ('Bantu Opinion') was established as long ago as 1884; others, such as the *Bantu World*, *Umteteli wa Bantu*, and *Ilanga lase Natal*, are more recent. These papers usually contain articles in more than one Bantu language and also in English, and the editors and staffs are Bantu. In recent years a company known as the Bantu Press, Ltd. was founded at Johannesburg, partly under European capital and control, and it has combined about five newspapers, with remarkable results in circulation. An increasing number of Bantu subscribe to European newspapers, because these, being wealthier concerns, have a better news service. With an increase in popular education for the Bantu, South African newspapers would be able to double and treble their circulation in a very short time.

A number of Bantu have written books, either in English or in one or other of the Bantu languages, and the number of those who submit manuscripts for publication is increasing every year. Among the best-known books in English are *The Black Problem*, and several others, by D. D. T. Jabavu, who is a graduate of London University and on the staff at Fort Hare; *The Bantu*, by Dr. Molema; and a novel called *Mhudi*, by S. T. Plaatje. Numerous translations from other languages, particularly English, have also been done by Bantu and by European writers. Tiyo Soga translated *The Pilgrim's Progress* into Xosa, and Plaatje translated Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* into Tswana. Recently a conference of Bantu authors was held at Johannesburg under the auspices of the South African Institute of Race Relations.

One of the difficulties about stimulating a love of reading among the Bantu is the lack of library facilities. Very few Bantu schools have library books and, in the towns,



the Bantu are not allowed to use the European public libraries. The number of those who can afford to buy books is very small indeed. Recently, in Johannesburg, Durban, and Bloemfontein, a beginning has been made, under a scheme made possible by the Carnegie Corporation, of sending out boxes of books to various centres such as schools and Bantu clubs. The Provincial Administrations make small grants to cover the administrative costs and the public libraries do the necessary staff work. Lack of funds makes the effort seem very small when compared with the need. The books in these libraries are mostly in English, though as many as exist in Bantu languages are bought. Bantu children read and like the kind of books that European children do. The older people do not at present care much for novels, because they think them a waste of time; they want instructive books and are very fond of history and biography.

Bantu men who are educated become ministers of religion, teachers, or Government servants, journalists, doctors, or lawyers. There are three or four lawyers, but the difficulties in the way of qualifying and of practising are so great that it is unlikely that many Bantu will enter this profession. There are eight Bantu medical doctors and seven of them practise among their own people in the Reserves. One, Dr. Xuma, has a big practice among the Bantu in Johannesburg. All of these doctors have a European as well as a Bantu practice.

Bantu ministers are trained by one or other of the mission societies and have very responsible positions. They are looked up to by their own people, and sometimes the feeling of being in authority is a temptation to them to try to get even more power. That is one of the reasons why there are, among the Bantu, so many

separatist Churches. If the European mission exercises too much control over the Bantu minister or evangelist, he is apt to resent this and found a Church on his own. Another reason for separatist Churches is that some Bantu, gifted, but not in a religious way, notices the power that a minister has and establishes a Church on his own in order to get that power and to provide a more comfortable living for himself. A third reason is, of course, that the European Churches themselves are divided, and the Bantu cannot always understand why they should not do likewise. National feeling sometimes urges them to found purely Bantu Churches free from European control. In South Africa there are about 200 separatist Churches registered by the Government and there must be many more unregistered. Some of these, such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church, have a large following; others, such as the 'Heaven Apostolic Jerusalem Church in Zion' are of local significance only.

A large number of Bantu who have a certain amount of education but are not trained professionally find employment in municipal and Government departments as clerks, interpreters, sanitary inspectors, and court officials. Others, after a course of training, become agricultural demonstrators in the Reserves. In practice, the number of professions or occupations open to educated or trained Bantu is limited by the expense of training and by colour prejudice or legislation after they have been trained. Most educated Bantu finish their training at a later age than do the Europeans. They go to school late and often have to break their course in order to earn sufficient money to complete it later. For Bantu women, the only two professions that are, in practice, open are nursing and teaching. Nurses go through exactly the same training

as Europeans do, but they find it difficult to get the necessary training, since the general hospitals will not allow them to train there.

A sign of the development of the Bantu is to be found in the growth of Bantu organizations, apart from the separatist Churches. Such organizations as the Cape Native Voters' Association, the African National Congress, the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (I.C.U.), and the various teachers' associations are examples of association of Bantu on a national or provincial rather than on a tribal basis. The leaders of these movements are usually the educated Bantu. As often happens with movements of this kind, however, among Europeans as well as among Bantu, semi-educated men try to use them for their own private gain. The organizations are not very strong, because the Bantu are not yet accustomed to this form of society and it is mostly among the urban Bantu that the members are to be found.

Churches and schools, libraries and newspapers, do not provide the only education that the Bantu receive. Those who work on farms and in towns are constantly learning by contact with Europeans. When Europeans are rude or polite to them, treat them justly or unjustly, the Bantu are learning all the time. It is the hard school of experience. But apart from this school and from the more formal methods of education, there are, in a number of towns, societies under European control that aim at the social education and welfare of the urban Bantu. The Wayfarers' Association is run on the same lines as the Girl Guides, and a part of it has recently been taken over by the Guides as part of their activities. For boys the Pathfinders' Association is a branch of, and works in close collaboration with, the Boy Scouts and does a similar kind of work. There are now thousands of Pathfinders

and Wayfarers in the Union, in the Protectorates, and in Southern and Northern Rhodesia. Then there are Non-European Child Welfare Associations and clubs for men and women. There are about forty Joint European and Bantu Councils and Native Welfare Associations. The Joint Councils usually consist of an equal number of Bantu and European members and they meet about once a month to discuss such matters as Bantu welfare, proposed legislation, methods of administration, and, generally, methods by which the relations between the two races may be improved. From time to time the Joint Councils organize a National Bantu-European Conference at which prominent men and women from both races speak. These societies all provide an opportunity for educated Bantu and educated Europeans to meet and learn to understand each others' difficulties and points of view.

The South African Institute of Race Relations has its headquarters at Johannesburg. The chief aims of the Institute are to promote research into the conditions of the various races of South Africa and to stimulate a healthy and informed public interest in questions affecting the contact between these races. Various universities, too, now have Departments of Bantu Studies for the purpose of encouraging research and of giving their students a knowledge of Bantu affairs. In some university centres there are Bantu study circles formed by the students with the object of stimulating an interest in race relations. Such student societies sometimes have debates against Bantu debating societies or get some prominent Bantu leader to address them. All these organizations are important factors in the education of both Bantu and European.

## CHAPTER XII

### POSITION OF THE BANTU IN SOUTHERN RHODESIA

**S**OUTHERN Rhodesia lies immediately to the north of the Union of South Africa, separated from it by the Limpopo Valley. The two territories have marked similarities in climate, industries, and social life. In the past, Bantu tribes have migrated from one to the other, and the two European populations have many close ties. But there are important differences between the two, and these differences will not necessarily grow less as time goes on.

Southern Rhodesia has an area of about 150,000 square miles, of which about one-quarter is above 4,000 ft. in altitude, and about two-thirds above 3,000. It is just within the tropics, and its lower altitudes are too hot and unhealthy for European settlement. Its higher levels, above 4,000 ft., have a pleasant climate, warmer as a rule than most parts of the Union, but less liable to extremes either of heat or cold. As in the Union, gold-mining is the most important industry, but the mines are scattered all over the country and vary in size. A few are as large as the average Rand mine; many are the smallest size of enterprise on which machinery can profitably be employed. The other staple industries are the mining of asbestos, coal, and chrome, the cultivation of maize and tobacco, the breeding of cattle, and the transport by rail of copper and other commodities between Northern Rhodesia and the port of Beira in Portuguese East Africa. Industries which are beginning to develop are sheep-rearing, cotton, fruit, timber, and the entertainment of tourists.

This compact territory, landlocked and isolated by an almost continuous ring of mountains or river valleys, contains Bantu and Europeans in proportions which as yet are intermediate between those of the Union and of Central Africa. There are approximately 60,000 Europeans and about 1,250,000 Bantu. The Europeans are found mostly in the two large towns (Salisbury and Bulawayo) and the five smaller ones (Umtali, Gatooma, Que Que, Gwelo, and Shabani). Others inhabit farms or villages or Government stations on or close to the long ridge of land over 4,000 ft. in altitude which forms the backbone and watershed of the country and along which the main railway lines run. The Bantu are found in large numbers both in European areas and in their own reserves, which extend into the European areas and occupy also most of the lower valleys, down which numerous rivers drain northwards and westwards into the Zambesi and south-eastwards into the Sabi.

Portuguese missionaries, soldiers, and traders visited the country during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when it was ruled, in part at least, by a potentate called the Monomatapa. He appears to have been the paramount chief of the Va-karanga or Makaranga, a group of tribes with considerable skill in pottery, iron work, mining, and building. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, the Va-karanga were overthrown by a more warlike tribe, the Va-roze, who reigned amongst them till about 1830, when their king, the Mambo, was himself overthrown by a returning wave of the Abanguni, under Zwangendaba or Mazangaba. The Abanguni passed on to the shores of Lake Nyasa far to the north, but a few years later came Mziligazi with his small but disciplined tribe of Amandebele. After long wanderings on the fringes of the Kalahari Desert, they settled in the

Matopo Hills and levied tribute from the Va-karanga and the Va-roze, who ultimately became part of the congeries of tribes known to Europeans as Mashona or, more correctly, Va-shona. Similarly, the tribes living in the eastern part of the country were harried, though not subjugated, by the Amatshangaana of Gazaland, another Nguni offshoot. The Amandebele impressed their authority on the Mashona by occasional raids and massacres. But the subject race was usually left alone, provided it paid its tribute of grain or cattle as demanded. The Amandebele collected large herds and acquired many girls as wives and many boys as slaves. Their stock was soon mixed with local blood, though the Amandebele laws and language were retained.

The distribution of the tribes is the same now as it was a hundred years ago, and the tribes are still distinct from one another in many respects, though these are fading out. The Amandebele inhabit the country near Bulawayo and speak Sindebele, which is a form of Zulu. A large area in the south-east of the country is occupied by the Va-karanga and another round Salisbury is occupied by tribes which are grouped as the Va-zezuru, who are related to the Va-karanga, as are the Wa-manyika of the eastern mountains, the Va-bujga, who live about a hundred miles north-east of Salisbury, the Ma-korekore west of them, the Va-tonga of the Zambesi Valley, and the Va-roze, who are scattered over most parts of the country except the neighbourhood of Bulawayo. In fact, all the tribes are related, and the areas they occupy are intermixed, with the exception of small groups of Amatshangaana, Bahlengwe, Basuto, and Bakaka, who are found on the eastern and southern borders, and the Va-remba, a small tribe who are unique amongst all the southern Bantu (*see* p. 18). The chief languages amongst

the Shona tribes are Chizezuru, Chikaranga, Chimanyika, and Chiroswe, which are all dialects of the same tongue. The Bakaka speak Sechuana. Sindebele is a form of Zulu, and there is a considerable Zulu infiltration in Chindau, a Shona language spoken by about 50,000 people in the eastern mountains south of Umtali, as well as by about 100,000 in Portuguese East Africa.

The Va-karanga of the central high-veld specialized in iron work from early times, no doubt because there were good deposits of iron there, and on the whole the Mashona of all tribes were and are good workmen and quick at learning European crafts. In this respect, they are rather different from the Amandebele, who have hitherto been fonder of cattle-herding than of other forms of labour. The difference is not likely to be permanent.

European hunters, Boer and British, soon began to visit the country regularly, missionaries came in 1859, gold prospectors in 1867. During the 1880's there was a contest amongst the Transvaal, the Portuguese, and Cecil Rhodes, to obtain possession of the country. Rhodes pushed ahead of the others, with the approval and to a certain extent the support of the governments of Cape Colony and Great Britain. His agents obtained in 1888 from Lobengula, the Amandebele King, a concession to mine gold. Its validity has since been questioned, but in 1889 he obtained a Royal Charter from Queen Victoria and founded the British South Africa Company to develop the country. In 1890 a strong expedition sent by Rhodes marched into the country, avoiding the Amandebele territory, and occupied Mashonaland. Friction with the neighbouring Amandebele was inevitable. In 1893 the Company went to war with the reluctant



Lobengula. He was rapidly defeated and the whole area was occupied and soon received the name of Rhodesia.

The Charter of 1889 said in Section XIV that 'in the administration of justice to the said peoples or inhabitants, careful regard shall always be had to the customs and laws of the class or tribe or nation to which the parties respectively belong, especially with regard to the holding possession and disposition of land'. Most Europeans at first intended to mine, not to farm, and there was not much demand for land, though large areas were bought cheap by companies and speculators. The Bantu enjoyed the benefits of peace, except during 1896-7, when first the Amandebele and then some of the Mashona were in rebellion. Otherwise their immediate gains were small, as the Amandebele lost a large proportion of their cattle, which were treated as royal property and seized by the Company when Lobengula was defeated. Locusts, rinderpest, and East Coast fever also helped to make the 1890's a very bad decade for the Amandebele and Mashona. The Bantu population at this time was estimated at about 400,000, but this estimate was very rough.

Officials to administer native affairs were appointed very soon after the first occupation, and in 1898 the whole Civil Service including the Native Affairs Department was reorganized. The country was divided into large districts, each usually about seventy miles across, about thirty in all, each under a Native Commissioner (a European). The duties of Native Commissioners have since become many and varied, but they were at first confined to the collection of taxes, political officer's work, and the administration of justice in criminal and civil cases. As a safeguard to these officers and to the Bantu whom they ruled, they could only be appointed, dismissed, and paid with the approval of the High Commissioner

for South Africa and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, while a Resident Commissioner represented the British Government on the spot. Under the new régime the chief grounds of discontent that had existed in the 1890's died out.

Native Commissioners were directed—and in any case would have found it useful—to act in many matters through local chiefs and headmen. As chiefs died, their successors were chosen by the Government, with some regard to the tribal laws but not necessarily in strict accordance with them. Chiefs were called in to assist Native Commissioners in their duties, especially in keeping order and collecting taxes. Kraals were registered and a tax was levied from 1895 onwards. In 1904 this tax was increased to 20s. per man, with 10s. extra for each wife after the first. This is still the rule. The tax had the effect of impelling men to find work with Europeans for the small wages then current. Though money was worth more then than now, the tax probably did not weigh so heavily on the Bantu as the same tax now does. In those days they still dressed in skins, travelled on foot, and spent practically nothing on European goods, so wages were available for other purposes. Nowadays it is becoming customary for them to buy European clothes and bicycles and even European foodstuffs and to travel by train and lorry, and so there are more demands on their money.

Native Commissioners frequently acted as magistrates, though it was not till 1910 that all Native Commissioners in districts where no Resident Magistrates were stationed were empowered to act as magistrates in all cases in which both parties were natives, and in criminal cases in which the accused was a native, as well as in other capacities involving both Europeans and Bantu. The majority of Native Commissioners have the same jurisdiction as

magistrates over Europeans. The tribal chiefs meanwhile lost a good deal of their authority and continued for many years to lose some of what remained. But they kept the power to settle small disputes amongst their people informally, those concerned being always able to appeal to the local Native Commissioner, if they liked and dared. Although the chiefs' authority went on declining, it never fell into complete disuse, and in recent years there has been a movement to revive it.<sup>1</sup> At the same time the authority of parents waned, though it remained fairly high according to European standards.

In the early days of the occupation, most of Southern Rhodesia was undeveloped and unmapped. The Chartered Company's government was usually short of money, and development was slow. Missionaries of several denominations were at work, and they began to build up a very incomplete system of missionary schools for the Bantu. European settlers were continuing to open up new farms, mines, and towns. In working for them and spending their wages in stores, Bantu men slowly absorbed a superficial acquaintance with European civilization.

Two large reserves were marked out in 1894, but they were poor land, and there seems in practice to have been no particular difference between the reserves and any other areas. In 1898, as a consequence of the recent rebellions, the British Government reorganized the government of Southern Rhodesia by an Order in Council, which, amongst other things, required the Company to 'assign to the natives inhabiting Southern Rhodesia land sufficient for their occupation, whether as tribes or portions of tribes, and suitable for their agricultural and pastoral requirements, including in all cases a fair and equitable proportion of springs or permanent water'.

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 205, for the Native Courts Act.

This was done, or attempted, during the next four years, but the reserves which were marked out varied in value. The difference in value was intensified by movements in the Bantu population as European settlers came on to occupied land, from which Bantu had to migrate to the nearest Reserve. The result was that some could carry their nominal populations, others could not.

About twenty years after the first European Occupation, doubts were openly uttered about the value of the Company's claim (based on the Rudd and Lippert Concessions) to the possession of all land in Southern Rhodesia. A case at law was begun and was heard by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London between 1914 and 1918. There were four parties to the case—the British Government, the Chartered Company, the European settlers, and the Bantu inhabitants, whose expenses were paid by sympathizers in Great Britain. The Court finally decreed that the ownership of the land must be held to be vested in the British Government, though the Company, having acted as agent for the British Government, was entitled to the repayment of money which it had laid out in the public administration of the country. In 1923 the British Government conveyed its own rights to the new Government of Southern Rhodesia.

Between 1915 and 1920 a fresh survey of the Reserves was carried out, and in 1920 an Order in Council of the British Government sanctioned several changes. The total area of the Reserves was reduced a little and they were grouped more compactly. It was understood that the 21,000,000 acres thus allocated were 'for the sole and exclusive use of the Native population'. No European was to be admitted to a Reserve unless his presence was for the benefit of the inhabitants. This meant only

officials, missionaries, and a limited number of traders. The Reserves were considered as a trust vested in the High Commissioner for South Africa. The Reserves are now vested in a Board of three Trustees—a Chairman nominated by the Secretary of State; the Chief Justice; and the Chief Native Commissioner. Regulations must have the approval of the Secretary of State, whose permission is also needed for any alienation. Alienation can only be proposed in a special case.

As there are still only 1,250,000 Bantu at most in Southern Rhodesia, the allowance of land is a good deal larger than in the Union of South Africa's reserves.

The same Order in Council enacted that 'no conditions, disabilities, or restrictions shall, without the previous consent of a Secretary of State, be imposed upon natives by Ordinances which do not equally apply to persons of European descent, save in respect of the supply of arms, ammunition and liquor'. It was possible for Bantu to buy land wherever they wished, though very few of them did so, as even the low market prices of those days were too high for them.

In 1923 responsible government was set up in Southern Rhodesia. It became a self-governing British Colony, the head of which is a Governor representing the King of England. There is a single-chamber Parliament of thirty members elected by constituencies in which the franchise is exercised by all adults of either sex who are able to read and write and who receive (or, if women, are married to a husband who receives) an income of £100 a year or its equivalent and are of fixed abode. The effect is that nearly all adult Europeans and a few hundred Bantu are qualified to vote. Parliament sits for two or three months annually, and legislates and votes supply in the same way as the House of Commons. There is a Cabinet of not more

than six members, each Minister controlling one or more Departments of the Administration. There is as yet no equivalent of the House of Lords or the South African Senate, but, as a check on legislation, bills dealing with one or two subjects must be 'reserved' for approval by the British Government. One of these subjects is 'any law, save in respect of the supply of arms, ammunition or liquor to natives, whereby natives may be subjected or made liable to any conditions, disabilities or restrictions to which persons of European descent are not also subjected or made liable'.

The administration is directed by Ministers and carried on by a Civil Service which has developed continuously from that of the Chartered Company. It is recruited partly from the children of European settlers, partly from Europeans born in the Union or Great Britain. A considerable number of Bantu are employed as messengers or in other subordinate capacities. Law and order are maintained by a police force of about 570 Europeans and 1,300 Bantu.

So far as law is concerned, the only distinctions between Europeans and Bantu are as follows. Bantu are not allowed to obtain wines, beer or 'spirits, except kaffir beer, the manufacture and sale of which are regulated. They are not normally allowed to possess or carry fire-arms, though a few are allowed to do so to defend their stock and crops against leopards, baboons, wild pigs, &c. All male adult Bantu are required to register and to possess and produce when demanded a registration certificate. Bantu women require to have passes permitting them to enter or stay in any European town unless they are the wives of men employed there. A special town pass<sup>1</sup> is also required of men, costing a shilling a

<sup>1</sup> Really a contract of service for men in employment affording *prima facie* evidence.

month—usually paid by the employer—and any one wishing to be out after 9 p.m. must have a special temporary pass for the purpose from his employer. The sale of native maize is regulated under different conditions from those which govern the transactions of European producers. Other differences that exist are not legal, but conventional.

One of the first steps taken by the new Government of Southern Rhodesia was to appoint in 1925 a Commission under Sir Morris Carter to inquire into the distribution of land between European and Bantu. The terms on which self-government was granted guaranteed that the reserves should not be reduced in size and that Bantu should have the same rights as Europeans regarding the sale and purchase of land, provided—in the interest of the Bantu themselves—that transactions were witnessed and approved by a magistrate. The Commission's report did not touch the Reserves, but recommended that two new kinds of areas should be marked out: (1) areas, including the existing European settlements, in which only Europeans should be allowed to buy or lease land; (2) areas adjoining the Reserves, in which Bantu, but not Europeans, should be allowed to buy land. The Commission's recommendations were embodied in the Land Apportionment Act, which was passed by the Southern Rhodesia Legislative Assembly in 1930 and approved by the British Government.

The Act divided the land of Southern Rhodesia, some 96,000,000 acres, into four areas, each composed of patches scattered over the whole country. There were (1) the European Area, (2) Native Reserves, (3) the Native Area, (4) the Unassigned Area. There were also (5) a comparatively small Forest Area (about 500,000 acres) and about 100,000 acres of 'undetermined' land, which

was occupied by Europeans, but would be added to a neighbouring portion of the Native Area if the Europeans owning it sold it for native occupation.

The European Area, nearly 49,000,000 acres, was, obviously, the area already occupied by Europeans or destined to be. It included most of the higher country and the railway belt.

The Native Reserves remained as before, about 21,600,000 acres. In these Reserves, the tribe owns the land in common, and its members share the use of the land and cultivate it individually under the direction of the chief or ultimately of the officials of the Native Affairs Department. There is a good deal of mutual assistance amongst neighbours, but tribes do not cultivate fields in common as European villagers used to do. The Commission thought that it was not as yet possible for individual Bantu to own land in Reserves.

The Native Area was a new creation. It consisted of about 7,500,000 acres of previously unoccupied land adjoining Native Reserves, where Bantu might buy land and establish themselves, free from the control of a chief.

The Unassigned Area, about 17,800,000 acres, was the remainder of the land, much of it too remote and unhealthy as yet for use. It might finally be allocated to either race or divided amongst them.

There was then, and there still is, a large number of Bantu living in the European Area. These included first, ordinary labourers, working temporarily on farms or mines or in other jobs, and secondly, a fairly large class who were living on land owned by European farmers and usually paying a rent of a pound or two a year for so doing. For some years already these 'private locations' had been governed by a law that all such tenancies must be under written agreements approved by the Chief



Native Commissioner and understood by the Bantu tenant. The Land Apportionment Act aimed at having all these private locations closed, except in cases where the Bantu were to be allowed to live on European land in return for labour services. The Act said that all cash tenancies must end in 1937, but the period has been extended to 1941 to permit of the development of the land resources and water supplies in the Reserves, to which the Bantu concerned must migrate. Thirdly, there were many Bantu living on land in the European Area which had not yet been sold or rented to Europeans—'unalienated Crown lands'. These Bantu were usually remnants or detached portions of tribes, and paid rent to the Government. The Commission recommended that they should be allowed to stay until the land was sold to Europeans, but encouraged meanwhile to move into the Native Area. Fourthly, there were Bantu living in European towns, where in law they had the right to buy land and houses like Europeans, though in fact they were usually too poor to do so. The Commission recommended that this should no longer be legally permissible, provided that Native Areas were set aside in the municipalities.

The Act laid it down that in the new Native Area no European could hold or occupy land except for mining, and any Europeans or Indians already there might be required to leave, with compensation. A Land Board was to be set up to control all leases or sales of land in the Native Area. It now consists of the Chief Native Commissioner and four others, one representing the Secretary of State for the Dominions.

Estimates of the numbers of the Bantu population are not accurate, but they appear to show that during the last ten or twelve years the number of Bantu whose homes

are in the Reserves has been fairly steady, about two-thirds of the total. Of those in the European Area, the number on unalienated Crown Land is about one-seventh of the total, while the number on alienated land (i.e. farms belonging to Europeans) is about one-sixth. A comparatively small number live permanently in European townships, in town locations, or in private locations near towns, where wage-earners rent cottages.

This distribution is quite different from that in the Union. In both countries the Government has declared itself in favour of separating the two races. In Southern Rhodesia the policy has a better chance of success, having begun at a much earlier stage.

A majority of the Bantu in Southern Rhodesia seem to prefer to live in the Reserves, and if they leave home it is more because they want to earn money to pay taxes or buy food than because they are attracted by a desire for adventure and the charms of town life, though this motive is not absent. Many like to live near towns, where they can combine the attractions of the two forms of life. Although a large proportion of the able-bodied men are always away from home at work, they do not provide much more than two-fifths of the whole labour-force of the Colony. The remainder is made up chiefly of Bantu from Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

Since 1930 the Government has aimed at putting the Land Apportionment Act into force, but there are difficulties in the way of moving large numbers of people. However, a good deal has been done and the speed of movement will no doubt increase.

In 1927 a Native Affairs Act consolidated the existing laws about native administration. Another Act of 1927 decreed that Bantu accused of serious crimes would not in future be tried by European juries as hitherto, but by

a European judge with two European assessors, who must have been Native Commissioners. Although trial by jury is usually a valuable defence of liberty, this change was clearly desirable.

If we ignore tribal divisions and take economic classifications, we can (in 1938) apportion the Bantu of Southern Rhodesia thus:

Those with homes in Reserves (men frequently away working for Europeans) .. .. .	about	755,505
Living in the Native Area (mostly still under old tribal system) .. .. .	about	59,190
Living on unalienated Crown Lands .. .. .	about	136,119
Living on private lands (all liable to be moved sooner or later) .. .. .	about	184,999
Living in native occupational areas on Crown Land .. .. .	about	5,674
Those with permanent homes in towns or on mines .. .. .	about	3,422
Total about		1,144,909

(Another official estimate gives a total of a little over 1,250,000, and some semi-official estimates put it even higher. These figures, however, may include the very large number of Bantu labourers and servants from Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, which is excluded from the table given above.)

We noted above that a large proportion of the grown men whose homes are in Southern Rhodesia are always away from home at any given time, working for Europeans. The figures of their distribution are as under:

	1936	1937
Working on mines .. .. .	23,659	23,800
Other occupations .. .. .	63,993	70,846
Total .. .. .	87,652	94,646

The number of women who work for Europeans has increased in recent years, but is still less than 2,000.

The natives of Southern Rhodesia are 'prohibited immigrants' in the Union and unless under indentured contract for the mines, can only enter clandestinely, as a number do. Large numbers, however, come down to Southern Rhodesia from the North. Formerly they used to travel down on foot, taking months over the journey and running considerable risks from wild beasts, illness, and lack of food. In recent years the improvements in roads and the demand for labour have made it possible to bring them down by motor lorry. Many also travel by train, and some still travel on foot. Agents in the northern territories collect labour and arrange for its transport, and are supervised by an official from Nyasaland. The consequences of so many men and boys leaving their homes for years at a time, sometimes for ever, were so bad that the governments of the two northern territories and Southern Rhodesia entered into an agreement to stabilize labour migration. In 1930 there were 58,000 Bantu from outside the country employed locally. The number rose steadily and was 74,000 in 1936, and over 97,000 in 1937. The impression given by figures is that these men stay a year or two and then go home and do not return. The following are the statistics for the last five years (those for 1933-5 are approximations):

				<i>Registered immigrants</i>	<i>Departures</i>
1933	..	..	..	52,334	27,571
1934	..	..	..	71,316	29,732
1935	..	..	..	67,672	37,351
1936	..	..	..	59,643	44,364
1937	..	..	..	80,303	43,535

Their distribution by occupations was as follows:

	1936	1937
Mines .. .. .	60,397	66,700
Other occupations ..	73,361	82,340

The Bantu labour employed on mines in Southern Rhodesia in 1937 consisted of 23,800 indigenous (i.e. local), rather more from Northern Rhodesia (26,300), more still (29,500) from Nyasaland, about two-fifths as many (9,500) from Portuguese East Africa, and 1,400 from elsewhere.

Figures for all the Bantu labour employed in Southern Rhodesia during a period of fifteen years are as follows:

<i>Country of Origin</i>	1921	1926	1931	1936
	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>
Southern Rhodesia ..	52,527	78,233	76,184	107,581
Portuguese East Africa	17,198	13,068	14,896	25,215
Northern Rhodesia ..	31,201	35,431	35,542	46,884
Nyasaland .. .. .	44,702	43,020	49,487	70,362
Other sources .. .. .	1,688	2,218	2,983	2,440
Total .. .. .	147,316	171,970	179,092	252,482

In the mining industry, which in 1936 was employing over 3,000 Europeans, the following figures show the increased demand for labour in recent years. Whereas in 1927 three-fifths of the Bantu labour was employed by mines with over 300 such employees each, in 1937 three-fifths were employed by mines with less than 300. The increase in labour was almost entirely due to the great increase in the number of small mines:

MONTHLY AVERAGE NUMBER OF NATIVES EMPLOYED  
IN THE MINING INDUSTRY, 1927-36

<i>Year</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Asbestos</i>	<i>Chrome</i>	<i>Coal</i>	<i>Other Minerals</i>	<i>Total</i>
	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>
1927	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)	42,046
1928	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)	43,703
1929	22,647	13,032	4,275	5,284	1,743	46,981
1930	21,898	11,937	5,148	4,570	1,789	45,342
1931	23,930	5,500	2,209	2,727	836	35,202
1932	30,031	3,297	668	1,897	157	36,050
1933	42,452	3,103	753	1,687	274	48,269
1934	54,767	3,955	965	2,167	485	62,339
1935	66,765	5,248	879	2,408	926	76,226
1936	71,431	6,401	2,258	2,367	1,635	84,092

(a) Not available.

The figures for the occupations of all Bantu working in Southern Rhodesia (both indigenous and from other territories) are given in the table on p. 200.

There are many more non-indigenous Bantu employed in Matabeleland than in Mashonaland—chiefly, no doubt, because the local population of Bantu is smaller. Though non-indigenous labour can come in direct by rail from Northern Rhodesia, little does.

We come now to native administration and development as organized by the Government.

The head of the Native Affairs Administration is the Prime Minister, who is also Minister of Native Affairs. At the head of the Civil Service Department of Native Affairs is the Chief Native Commissioner, who is also Secretary for Native Affairs and Director of Native Development. There is an Assistant Chief Native Commissioner stationed at Salisbury, like the Chief Native Commissioner. At Bulawayo there is a Superintendent

PRINCIPAL OCCUPATIONS OF NATIVE MALES EMPLOYED IN MASHONALAND, MATABELELAND AND SOUTHERN RHODESIA, 1931 AND 1936

<i>Occupations</i>	<i>Mashonaland</i>		<i>Matabelerland</i>		<i>Southern Rhodesia</i>	
	1931	1936	1931	1936	1931	1936
Domestic service ..	No. 13,895	No. 17,404	No. 10,643	No. 13,518	No. 24,538	No. 30,932
Agriculture ..	51,599	68,376	15,878	14,683	67,477	83,061
Mining and quarrying ..	15,334	34,542	24,311	49,754	39,645	84,305
Manufactures ..	5,754	6,459	4,280	5,872	10,034	12,339
Persons on road work, bridges, drains, &c. ..	2,375	7,406	2,202	4,412	4,577	11,819
Transport—railway ..	2,271	2,411	12,545	3,332	14,857	5,778
—other ..	2,178	1,868	1,646	1,752	3,824	3,626
Persons in shops, offices, warehousemen, packers, &c. ..	4,291	6,555	2,674	3,517	6,965	10,079
Other and undefined workers	3,250	5,934	3,924	4,600	7,175	10,543
Total ..	100,947	150,955	78,103	101,440	179,092(a)	252,482(b)

(a) Includes 42 railway travellers.

(b) Includes 87 railway travellers.

Whereas at both census dates agriculture was the predominant occupation in Mashonaland, mining and quarrying was the principal occupation in Matabelerland. In both provinces in addition to agriculture and mining, domestic service was the remaining important occupation.

of Natives who advises and supervises Native Commissioners in the greater part of Matabeleland. There are thirty Native Commissioners, fifty Assistant Native Commissioners, and rather less than 100 junior officials. The officials of this Department are required to pass examinations in law, native administration, and one or more of the Native languages.

These officials are employed amongst other duties in holding courts both as magistrates and in their capacity of Native Commissioners, of which the powers both formal and informal are greater than a magistrate's; collecting taxes, employing tax defaulters on public works in the Reserves, directing chiefs, developing roads and making drifts, causeways, and even bridges; considering applications for trading licences and recommending sites for stores, schools, and missions; encouraging native industries and assisting the other European officials who are organizing the medical, agricultural, and educational services. In legal matters they are guided by Bantu customary law so long as it is not opposed to natural justice or morality or to specific provisions of the law of Southern Rhodesia. In civil cases a party in a case may appeal to a court consisting of the Chief Native Commissioner and two assessors, and if still dissatisfied can appeal to the High Court. In criminal cases, a man charged with an offence under the Native Affairs Act may appeal to the Chief Native Commissioner and then to the High Court. In other cases he may appeal direct to the High Court. There are no Bantu lawyers. Bantu may employ European lawyers if they can pay the fees, and if charged with serious crimes are given the services of defending lawyers free in the High Court.

The Native Commissioners act in general as the representatives and agents of Government in their districts.



Since motor transport has been introduced, it has become easier for them to get about their districts, especially since roads were improved. But, owing to the great increase in the pressure of office and court work, they cannot go round on foot, visiting every kraal as they used to do formerly. Natives move about much more than they used to do, and this enables them to see the men of each district.

Specialist officers of the Native Affairs Department include the Assistant Director of Native Lands, the Director of Native Education and his staff of Inspectors, an Agriculturalist, an Agricultural Adviser, a Land Inspector, a Soil Conservation Officer, and Soil Survey Officers. The work they do will be described later.

The tax payable by every Bantu is, as mentioned above, £1 for every adult male, whether or not his home is in Southern Rhodesia, who has lived there for at least one year; 10s. a year is payable for each wife after the first, and any man who is too poor to pay and who by reason of age or illness is unable to work may obtain exemption. Native pupils and students may under certain conditions be exempted. The tax on wives is not enforced on non-indigenous men.

The taxation of Bantu has yielded larger sums year by year for some years past, partly owing no doubt to prosperous conditions in the Colony, which have made it easier to earn the money wherewith to pay. Some figures for recent years are as follows:

			<i>Native Tax</i>	<i>Dog Tax</i>	<i>Minor fees</i>
			£	£	£
1931	..	..	337,752	21,748	10,497
1935 ..	..	..	366,298	13,941	12,461
1936 ..	..	..	390,117	14,186	12,981
1937 ..	..	..	394,290	15,264	13,571

Of this, the tax on Bantu from the northern territories

amounted in 1936 to £106,616. The Bantu also pay their share of indirect taxation in the form of Customs duties paid by the importers of the goods they buy in stores. It is not easy to calculate what this amounts to.

Those who own cattle are required to dip them regularly as a preventive of cattle diseases, and the charge for this is usually about 1s. a year per beast to cover the cost of building and filling the dipping-tanks. Where there is no danger of infection and the cattle are in poor health, the dipping regulations may be relaxed.

The total direct revenue from the Bantu (£423,125 in 1937) was an increase of over 80 per cent. above the yield in 1911, although the rate of taxation has not increased and polygamy became a little less common meanwhile. The increase is due to increase in population and better methods of collecting from Northern natives, the number of whom has greatly increased.

There are in the country some 360 subsidized chiefs. Some of them, like Mtasa and the Makoni, are important persons who receive salaries of £100 a year or more. Others receive a couple of pounds a month for the duties they carry out. There are 20,000 recognized kraals, as against 13,361 in 1911. A kraal, it should be stated, does not now mean necessarily a compact stockaded group of huts, but a collection of huts which may be scattered over a square mile of country, and whose occupants all obey the same kraal-head or headman.

The Constitution given to Southern Rhodesia in 1923 authorized the formation of Native Councils in the different parts of each native district. It had for a long time been customary to hold meetings in each district at which the people could express their views to the local Native Commissioner. By the Native Councils Act of 1937, the

Governor may establish a Native Council in any area, if the natives in that area ask for it. These councils are to contain the local chiefs and headmen and a number of male (indigenous) natives appointed by the Governor for periods of not more than two years. The Native Commissioner in whose district the Council is established is to preside at meetings, advise the Council, and exercise its executive powers. These Councils are to consider such matters as water supplies, roads, bridges, irrigation canals, afforestation, conservation of timber and soil, methods of agriculture, animal husbandry and veld management, marketing, education, sanitation, housing, village planning, the prevention of over-stocking and of stock diseases (by means of dipping or other measures), the suppression of noxious weeds, the prevention of nuisances, the acquisition of property for these purposes, and, in general, any matter of local native administration which in the opinion of the Governor can be safely and satisfactorily undertaken by the Council. It may enact by-laws imposing fees and fines, subject to the Governor's approval. It is the duty of a Council to furnish its views upon any matter on which the Governor asks for them, and a Council may, if it so desires, submit to the Governor its views on any matter which is of direct interest or concern to it or to the natives of the Colony generally. The Governor may summon joint meetings of any two or more Councils or delegates from them.<sup>1</sup>

Though nothing like full 'indirect rule' is possible or desirable here, chiefs may now regain some of their dignity and influence and play a part in local government. In the past the laws of inheritance often led to the accession of old and unsatisfactory chiefs, but the Government has the power to regulate the succession, and it aims now at choosing men who, while having good claims in tribal

<sup>1</sup> About twenty such Councils have now (end of 1938) been established.

law, are young, intelligent, and energetic. A chief of this kind, guided by a Native Commissioner, can greatly assist the development of his fellow tribesmen. Chiefs hold their office during pleasure of the Governor, but are not removed without good reason. Each chief ranks as a constable within his own area and is responsible for the good behaviour of his people and of any others who may come into it. He is required to assist in collecting taxes and to provide the Native Commissioner with all information that comes to him about crime, disease, deaths, movements of people, and discontent of any kind. He may also be required to provide men for the defence of the Colony or the suppression of rebellion or disorder. Headmen, who also rank as constables, are nominated by the chiefs, and the Native Department usually accepts their nomination.

Under the Native Law and Courts Act of 1937, the Governor may create native courts, each under a chief or headman, with at least two councillors approved by the Native Commissioner of the district, to try small cases. If a majority of his councillors oppose his verdict, the case will be referred to the Native Commissioner; otherwise he gives his decision in open court. He has jurisdiction only over natives resident in the vicinity, but he can ask the Native Commissioner to summon natives resident in other areas to the court. The local Native Commissioner may always intervene, or transfer a case to his own court, and an appeal lies to him. Any individual native who wishes to be freed from the jurisdiction of chiefs' courts may apply for a certificate, which the Chief Native Commissioner may grant, subject to the approval of the Minister, declaring that for the purposes of this Act only he shall not be deemed to be a native. This certificate may not be given if proceedings against him in a chief's court are already pending.

The object of this Act is described in the following passage from the Chief Native Commissioner's annual report for 1935:

'By granting a safeguarded measure of jurisdiction and establishing regular courts, we should probably do something towards inaugurating a process of restoring order and dignity to Native society. To-day there is practically nothing to distinguish a chief's kraal from any other. But it might become a social centre, a little market-town where craftsmen might begin to find customers, where mart days and possibly fair days and Show days might come to be established—simple institutions, but of importance in any attempt to revivify human groups in danger of disintegration.'

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In 1937 the number of men on the tax register was 271,917, of whom 176,420 were married, and 24,509 of these polygamous. As there were 213,585 married women, half of these 24,509 polygamists may have had three wives, some of them even four.

As we noted above, about 70 per cent. of the Bantu have homes in Reserves, and practically all the remainder live under tribal conditions on Crown lands, European lands, or in those parts of the Native Area that have not yet been alienated under agreement to purchase. At any given time, about one-third of the men are absent, working for Europeans. This includes most of those between sixteen and thirty. Sometimes they are unable to visit their homes for a year or more at a time, but usually they live within fairly easy reach—by train or lorry, or even by bicycle or on foot.

But even in remote areas they have felt the impact of European civilization on tribal life. Changes similar

to those in the Union have occurred in Southern Rhodesia, though they have not gone so far. Native Agriculture still follows the wasteful old practices, with too much burning of trees, scratching of the soil, careless sowing of crops, and neglect of weeding and manure. Much of the land in Reserves is useless because of its poor quality, stoniness, lack of water, low rainfall, or erosion, or because it is in a tsetse-fly area. In some Reserves the habitable area is as low as 50 per cent. Before the recent development of schemes for conserving and economizing the soil, the arable area was decreasing rapidly. But on the whole the soil of the country is fertile and with proper use would give far better results than it ever used to do under Bantu methods, which consisted of cutting down and burning all the timber, merely scratching the soil, growing repeated crops until a field was exhausted, grazing more cattle than the land could profitably carry, and allowing erosion to go on unchecked, heavy rains scouring away the earth down to the bare rock on worn cattle tracks. The European agricultural staff, assisted by nearly a hundred native demonstrators, are always at work trying to improve methods by showing the proper way of preparing the ground and sowing seed, how to develop new crops, and how to breed better cattle. Demonstrations are made with about fourteen kinds of grain, including rice. The demonstrators usually cultivate small plots alongside similar plots which are worked in the old way, in order to make it quite plain that, as the conjurers say, there is no deception. Whereas the ordinary yield on native plots is less than two bags of mealies to the acre, demonstrators have got as much as thirty-four bags of maize to the acre, and the average is from five to sixteen, according to conditions. Yields of more than thirty bags to the acre are

not rare. The essence of this method is that the demonstrator should work on average land and allow other men to grow crops on adjacent land in the old-fashioned way and get yields of about a fifth as much as the expert demonstrators do. They even get good yields from apparently waste land.

The object is not to increase the area under cultivation so much as to make better use of a smaller area, provide more food for the inhabitants, and preserve the value of the land, which was rapidly being worn out. A policy of 'centralization' is being followed in the Reserves, and has already helped to recover several large areas which a few years ago seemed to have been exhausted. The Reserve is surveyed and then divided into areas which may be used for grazing and cultivation respectively—grazing along the bottom of the *vleis*, cultivation on the higher levels, the inhabitants being directed to build their huts along the boundary between the two. A four-year rotation of crops is being followed—first maize, then another cereal (not *rapoko*), then a legume, then *rapoko*. Areas of forest are also reserved, and the inhabitants are forbidden to cut wood except for fuel in the kraal. A certain amount of tree-planting is done. This policy, with contour ridging and other measures against erosion, should greatly economize the available land and save it from the fate to which all land succumbs when its quality is limited and it is farmed unscientifically. In the course of some years it should be possible to survey all the native Reserves and carry the policy out generally. Cheap tools and methods are devised to take the place of expensive equipment whenever possible, e.g. in contour ridging.

This particular kind of agricultural development has only been going on for about ten years and its effects are still comparatively small. The amount of work done

annually has increased enormously, and before long a marked improvement in the condition of the Reserves ought to be visible.

In the Reserves and in the parts of the Native Area that have been settled, work is being done by the Native Development Department and the Department of Irrigation to provide more water. The supply of water is a most urgent problem at all times, and in some parts of the country the water 'table' is falling. Several boring machines are always at work, and schemes are also in progress for irrigating semi-arid areas like the Sabi River Valley by means of dams. About 2,350 acres are already under cultivation. In the Sabi Valley a scheme for irrigating about 3,000 acres is nearly completed and will enable about 1,000 families to live where seven lived before. In this area and others like it, there often used to be famine, and relief works were necessary.

Experiments are also going on with drought-resisting and quick-growing strains of maize, which will avert the likelihood of serious food shortage such as may still occur. A course of instruction for chiefs is conducted at the Government School at Domboshawa, near Salisbury, in which they are given the necessary knowledge to enable them to play their part in this work.

Work is also done by 'Community Demonstrators', who show the people living in the Reserves how to lay out better villages, build better houses of brick, make roads, organize sanitation, and construct weevil-proof grain bins. Tree plantations are also encouraged. Up to the present time (1938), about 600 villages have been planned on these improved lines.

There is a Native Reserves Trust which has command of some small funds (store licence fees, sale of timber, &c.) and in 1937 it spent £10,000 on agriculture, roads,



be about the same (about 240,000) and goats have increased a little from 600,000 to over 750,000, while pigs, which were uncommon then, now number 93,000. Goats and pigs, unfortunately, are destructive animals; the former crop grass down to its roots, while pigs often cause disease in kraals.

Most Bantu farming is still done for subsistence—that is, to provide food and beer for the family on the spot—but an increasing amount of grain is being produced for sale. The sale of maize is regulated by the Maize Control Act. Under this, the European maize-farmer must hand over all his crop to the pool for sale by the Control Board. Each producer shares in the proceeds of the local (Southern Rhodesia) sales according to his 'quota'. The quota of each European producer is fixed and depends on what he marketed in the two years before May 31st, 1933. A native grower's quota bears the same ratio to the total quantity of maize (and maize meal) surrendered by him during the year as the average European grower's quota does to his total production. Production in excess of the quota goes into the export pool, and the grower is paid proportionately out of whatever price the exported maize realizes. The native participation in the local pool has risen considerably since the Act came into force, and in certain districts, where transport is good, it seems to have stimulated production considerably. The Bantu may also sell to each other (provided the buyer is not in the employment of a European) or to prospectors employing not more than five natives, or they may sell to the Control Board for export. (In a recent year the Board bought 41,622 bags for this purpose.) They may also sell to traders and to farmers who wish to use the maize themselves and have made arrangements with the Control Board.

Cotton is being encouraged as a rotational crop and over 32,000 lb. were reaped in 1937, which sold for about £150. This is a very small beginning, but if the demand for cotton increased it might expand. In some districts the younger men have taken to planting fruit trees. Fruit would be a valuable novelty in the Bantu diet and might to some extent replace beer.

Measures to check the spread of cattle disease are taken with the cattle of Bantu as well as Europeans—that is to say, cattle must be dipped regularly, and, if an epidemic starts, infected areas are fenced and sick beasts destroyed. The number so destroyed may sometimes be heavy. Drought may also cost thousands of head and drive their owners back to the use of *badzas* in the fields, the draught cattle being dead.

The African Hides and Produce Co., Ltd. operates in nearly all districts and buys skins by weight and quality for cash. A market is developing for goat and sheep skins and certain furs. It is intended soon to encourage bee-keeping, and to try to start exporting beeswax. The same company is hoping to make transport much easier by providing a light steel cart which can be repaired easily and which will not wear the ground so much as the sledge hitherto often used for conveying goods. Eventually an export trade in ground-nuts and cotton may be built up.

It is noticeable that hitherto, although there are many stores in Reserves, not many are managed by Bantu. The causes are presumably that so few Bantu have hitherto been able to write letters or keep accounts, and that fewer still have had any capital or credit. Consequently, such stores have been managed, usually very profitably, by Europeans and Indians.

There are still a few tribes whose members see very

ttle of Europeans, speak no English, earn the minimum amount necessary to pay taxes, and live in a way not easily distinguishable from the ancient Bantu mode of life, except that it includes much less hunting and no fighting. At the other extreme, there are groups who can speak and write English quite correctly, use European utensils, and live in houses resembling European cottages; they may have an active district advisory board, progressive young chief, and perhaps even sports committees, as some Reserves have. Between these extremes, the average Bantu are living much as in the past, but have adopted numerous small usages from Europeans. An increasing number can at any rate read their own languages. In and near the towns, *lobola* is being converted into a money payment. As a rule, the women are much less affected by European life than the men, since it is so rare for them to go to work in towns or on farms. The belief in the various forms of witchcraft is not extinct, and every year the courts have to try about a hundred cases of attempts to use it or to have some one convicted of trying to use it. In recent years the use of skins for clothing has almost died out. Cheap white or khaki things or old European clothes are the usual wear for men, blue calico for women. Bicycles are common, and a few Bantu have motor-cars—usually very old—but here is still great need for improvement in transport.

We now come to the *Native Area*, as distinct from the Reserves. It still contains a large number of people living under tribal conditions, but the land is gradually being handed over to men who are taking over small farms. These are usually of from 200 to 300 acres. In some of the more fertile parts of Mashonaland, plots of 70 acres are common. The owners are not allowed to subdivide

their plots and must obey certain instructions regarding their farming methods. The purchase price is payable in instalments, without interest, over a period of fifteen years. It varies according to the district and the type of soil and climate. Perhaps 5s. an acre is about the average. Some 800 plots have now been alienated under agreements to purchase. Over 400 applications are received annually, but there is great difficulty in getting the land surveyed quickly enough and the transfers completed. The men who take up these plots are not necessarily a kind of 'aristocracy'. Many of them are comparatively poor. Some men continue to work in town and instal a relation as manager to look after the plot. Tribal chiefs have no control over men living in these areas. There were at first many applications from Bantu who belonged to non-Southern Rhodesian tribes and had found their way to Rhodesia, but the Act forbids the sale of land to men who have not lived in the country for at least ten years, which must have begun before 1931.

The Native Area consists of a large number of scattered patches of land, in each of which there is a Government reserve for the site of a school and other public buildings. It is also intended to develop a number of towns. Sites of 500 or 600 acres are to be marked out, where Bantu craftsmen and traders can buy an acre or two, build a small house and ply their trades amongst the settlers in the surrounding plots.

There is also a new 'Native Occupational Area' of about 500,000 acres of land, which have been bought by the Government to be let out to tenants for a small rent (10s. per head annually).

At present there are still many Bantu living on European farms as rent-paying tenants or squatters; but the intention of the provisions of the Land Apportionment

Act is that with a few exceptions they will after 1941 only be permitted to occupy alienated land in the European area if (a) no burden is imposed on them or (b) they supply labour to the owner or occupier on terms to be approved by the Chief Native Commissioner.

Generally labourers contract to work for six months or a year. Contracts for a year or less can be made orally. For longer periods they must be in writing. Frequently men return to the same employer year after year. They usually live in a compound of pole-and-mud huts. Some farms (tobacco) employ large numbers—anything up to 100 under one European employer. Large estates have several hundred, with proportionately larger European staffs. Mixed farming requires smaller numbers. The wage for farm labourers is as a rule about 12s. 6d. to 15s. a month (thirty working days), plus food and lodging. It is doubtful whether working for Europeans trains men in anything which they can use in the Reserves afterwards. The conditions are entirely different, European equipment is usually much more expensive than anything they can afford, and they are liable to argue that any success achieved by Europeans is due to magic or 'medicine'. A small amount of direct instruction in the Reserves has had a more civilizing effect than all the experience which they have acquired collectively on European farms. No doubt the sight of European civilization provides a stimulus.

Work on mines is more difficult and dangerous than on farms. The Bantu used to have a deep fear of caves and tunnels, which they believed to be haunted by vindictive spirits, to whose displeasure they ascribed any accidents that might occur. This feeling is less effective nowadays, but a natural dislike for the risks of underground work remains. The wages, accordingly, have to be higher. The following figures give the position:

# WAGES IN SHILLINGS AND PENCE FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE

	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937
<i>Gold Mines.</i>						
Machines and drills ..	39·8	36·8	37·11	36·1	33·6	33·10
Hammer boys ..	25·3	22·7	21·10	21·4	21·8	21·3
Trammers and lashers ..	23·7	21·5	191·8	19·0	19·3	19·11
Other underground workers	28·7	25·3	23·7	23·3	23·5	25·0
Mill and reduction plant ..	23·4	20·9	19·5	19·2	19·0	19·4
Other surface workers ..	22·6	20·4	19·2	18·7	18·6	19·4
<i>Average</i> .. ..	24·4	21·9	20·6	20·1	20·2	20·9
<i>Asbestos Mines.</i>						
Machines and drills ..	45·0	45·0	27·6	27·6	27·6	27·6
Hammer boys ..	32·7	28·0	24·6	22·10	24·9	24·3
Trammers and lashers ..	25·2	25·2	22·10	21·6	22·6	22·8
Other underground workers	27·2	28·5	25·5	26·3	26·0	26·3
Mill and reduction plant ..	27·6	27·2	20·6	20·1	19·9	22·7
Other surface workers ..	28·6	28·0	24·10	22·3	21·6	23·0
<i>Average</i> .. ..	27·8	27·3	23·7	21·7	21·9	23·1
<i>Chrome Mines.</i>						
Machines and drills ..	No figures.					22·6
Hammer boys ..	26·5	21·10	22·8	24·2	21·6	22·4
Trammers and lashers ..	25·2	21·10	20·2	21·6	20·3	20·1
Other underground workers	27·4	21·10	23·2	24·5	22·0	22·3
Mill and reduction plant ..	—	—	23·0	21·6	22·9	22·6
Other surface workers ..	22·3	18·5	20·10	22·3	21·0	21·6
<i>Average</i> .. ..	23·7	19·7	21·2	22·9	21·3	21·4
<i>Coal Mines.</i>						
Machines and drills ..	62·6	62·6	96·3	90·0	113·9	119·9
Hammer boys ..	52·6	52·6	52·3	42·6	49·6	49·3
Trammers and lashers ..	62·0	62·0	61·3	58·4	63·3	65·0
Other underground workers	47·6	50·0	52·0	52·11	48·3	43·6
Surface workers ..	42·6	38·0	36·3	35·1	37·0	34·0
<i>Average</i> .. ..	49·8	48·9	43·11	49·2	51·6	49·0
<i>All Mines.</i>						
Machines and drills ..	43·9	39·10	44·2	39·8	38·5	38·10
Hammer boys ..	25·5	22·8	21·11	21·4	21·8	21·4
Trammers and lashers ..	26·9	23·11	21·9	20·9	21·5	22·6
Other underground workers	32·0	27·5	23·11	26·0	25·5	26·9
Mill and reduction plant ..	23·9	21·1	19·6	19·3	19·1	19·7
Other surface workers ..	24·7	21·7	20·7	19·7	19·8	20·8
<i>Average</i> .. ..	25·11	22·11	21·7	21·1	21·2	22·0

Mines in Rhodesia vary considerably in size and so do the conditions under which the European staff and Bantu live and work. Some have excellent living conditions for their labourers and their families; others cannot apparently afford good huts or more than the bare minimum of food. Since 1911 a minimum scale of rations has been laid down by Government: 1½ lb. of meal per day, 2 lb. of beans, 2 lb. of vegetables, 1 lb. of nuts, and 3½ oz. of salt per week, and 1 lb. of meat twice a week. This would be a more satisfactory ration if it included a quantity of orange juice or some other cheap anti-scorbutic. Compound inspectors are appointed by the Native Affairs Department to travel round the country and see that these rations are given, not only on mines, but, under the agreements with the northern governments, in all compounds.

There are, finally, the Bantu living in European townships. In Salisbury there are about 22,000 (18,000 employed men and 4,000 women, children, and unemployed men). In Bulawayo there are not so many—about 18,000 in all. In Bulawayo native wages are higher and the labour may be more efficient. The other towns and villages contain proportionate numbers. These numbers have almost doubled since 1931, the towns having grown considerably. A large number of these are cooks or houseboys, garden boys or messengers who live in quarters provided on the premises of their employers and get food from him. The type of quarters has improved greatly during the last ten years. Wages vary, but are usually higher than on farms. Perhaps 25s. a month might be taken as an average wage for houseboys, plus the value of food and quarters, but there are cases of much higher pay, sometimes rising to £9 a month for a cook.

Besides those who live in quarters provided by their employers, many live in the municipal locations or in private locations near the town. These include a large number of Government messengers and others who draw comparatively high salaries, sometimes, in rare cases, rising to £5 a month with uniform. These men travel to and fro daily, usually on bicycles, often for ten miles or more. Under the Land Apportionment Act there will be a village settlement at each large town. One has been started at Luveve, near Bulawayo; another near Salisbury at Highfields. Over a hundred families are already living at Luveve in clean neat cottages of a cheap and attractive type, built by native labour.

In Salisbury there are about 6,000 men, women, and children living in the municipal location; at Bulawayo about 10,000 (a much higher proportion). The Salisbury location has a fairly settled population; the inhabitants do not move much, except to and from their daily work. They seem to like the life and its interests, dull though it seems by European standards. The location is managed by a European superintendent, with European assistants, and there are a hall and some facilities for playing football and other games, including tennis. The various religious denominations conduct schools near the location and some 'welfare work' is done by voluntary workers. The location contains two types of house: (a) one with four rooms, each room having a small kitchen, rented at 11s. a month per room. One room is usually inhabited by a family or four single men. (b) One with two rooms and a kitchen, rented for 17s., suitable for a large family or a family and lodgers. Hitherto it has been necessary to build with European labour, and each room costs about £50 to build. For a single man sharing a room with three others, the rents are not high. But a man with a family,



all living in one room, on an income of 25s. a month, would find it very hard to pay his expenses. His rent would be 11s., firewood would cost him 5s., food at least 6s., leaving a very small margin for taxes, clothes, and saving.

The chief recreation is football. There are at Salisbury location about 300 men who play, and there is a well-organized league. Concerts and dances are held, books and newspapers can be read by those who wish, and there is a beer-hall. The Kaffir Beer Act provides that profits on the sale of beer in the Municipal beer-halls are to be used for the benefit of the people of the location. Illicit beer-making is also carried on and is so profitable that even heavy fines do not stop it.

Hitherto relatively few Bantu have been born and bred in locations, but a number of children are born there every year. Many die young, others are sent out to be brought up by relations in the Reserve, but others grow up there and are urbanized. It is also becoming commoner for Christian names and some kind of surname to be adopted instead of the original Bantu name or the more or less ridiculous nicknames which used to be generally bestowed.

In and around locations and to some extent in native and European farming areas, there are about 3,000 Bantu (both indigenous and immigrant) following trades as their own masters. The figures for 1936 are as follows, the 1937 figures being given in parentheses:

Builders .. ..	612 (589)	Cobblers .. ..	344 (326)
Carpenters .. ..	283 (304)	Transport riders	182 (164)
Tailors .. ..	170 (57)	Painters .. ..	135 (197)
Hawkers .. ..	135	Well-sinkers .. ..	134 (146)
Cycle repairers ..	110 (131)	Brickmakers .. ..	112 (110)
Thatchers .. ..	108 (89)	Gardeners .. ..	77 (83)
Curio makers .. ..	70 (85)	Herbalists .. ..	66 (59)

Eating-house keepers	..	45 (58)	Mattress-makers	45 (60)
Sievmakers	..	30 (20)	Blacksmiths	.. 39 (38)
Musicians	..	24 (12)	General dealers	.. 25 (29)
Upholsterers	..	22 (7)	Laundrymen	.. 24 (33)
Wireworkers	..	16 (15)	Cabinet-makers	.. 17
Basket-makers	..	14	Charcoal-burners	14 (12)
Broom-makers	..	9	Odd-job men	.. 12
Silversmiths	..	7 (1)	Barbers	.. 8 (2)
<i>Kaross</i> -makers	..	6 (23)	Tennis-court makers..	.. 8 (8)
Cattle dealers	..	5 (2)	Hatters and Mil-	
Wood-sellers	..	5 (1)	liners	.. 5
Taxi-drivers	..	5	Dairymen	.. 4 (11)
Butchers	..	4 (5)	Mechanics	.. 4 (2)
Bootblacks	..	3 (1)	Photographers	.. 3 (5)
Dry cleaners	..	2	Sailmaker	.. 1
Tanner	..	1	Weaver	.. 1
Watchmaker	..	1 (4)	Bakers	.. 2
Miscellaneous	..	19		

These figures do not include those employed by Europeans in the building or any other trade. The changes in numbers from year to year may mean that many of them are in a very small way of business indeed, and go back to working for Europeans either occasionally or permanently.

Practically all manual trades rely on the Bantu for unskilled and even semi-skilled labour. In the Union much of the corresponding work would be done by poor Europeans. In recent years the principles of the Union Industrial Conciliation Act have been adopted in the building and printing industries and may be extended to other trades. It is proposed to extend them to the motor and engineering trades in 1939. Under the Act, each industry can set up an industrial council composed of equal numbers of representatives of employers and employees (elected by the respective unions or associations), and these Councils can establish minimum wages for skilled labour, irrespective of colour, though in

practice only Europeans have been able to come up to the 'skilled' standard. There are as yet no minimum wages for unskilled or semi-skilled labour, the rates for which vary considerably. Whereas skilled labour is paid a good deal more than similar labour in the Union, according to the higher cost of living, unskilled labour is paid as a rule far less. The Act applies within ten miles of the centre of Salisbury, the same at Bulawayo, twelve miles at Umtali (to include Penhalonga), and three miles at Que Que and Gwelo. It does not apply to railway areas or to natives working on their own account as contractors or to locations. Such building as is done by natives working independently has hitherto been done chiefly by men from Nyasaland.

There are in the towns a certain number of men who are merely living at the expense of their employed friends, sometimes to a certain extent at the expense of their friends' employers. The effects of this kind of existence are bad, and it is intended to start hostels in which men looking for work can be lodged and controlled. Mere idlers will have to leave.

Missions always did medical work and in recent years there has been a great increase in the interest taken by the Government in it. The hospitals in the towns contain large native departments, and a scheme has been started to extend medical services into the Reserves. Some forty small hospitals or clinics for Bantu have been built in or near Reserves, or taken over from missions and enlarged. The cost has been very low, as Bantu labour has been used, and the patients have been provided with huts of the ordinary pattern rather than with buildings of European type. This is partly for cheapness and partly because it is better for patients to live in the kind of surroundings to which they are accustomed. The cost,

therefore, has not exceeded £600 per hospital. These provide small operating theatres, wards for the serious cases, and huts for convalescent patients. They have staffs of trained Bantu orderlies and are supervised by the Government Medical Officer of the district. In some cases the missions continue their medical work in the neighbourhood, assisted by generous grants from Government. In addition, Government provides chests of simple medicines for the kraal schools, and in all areas there is the closest co-operation between the Government Medical Officers and the missions. It is intended to increase the number of these small hospitals considerably. The Native Commissioners collaborate with the Medical Department in several directions.

A particularly large hospital and group of clinics are maintained at Ndanga in the middle of a large area of Reserves. This hospital accounted in 1937 for about a third of the in-patients and a quarter of the out-patients treated in Government clinics and dispensaries, the totals being about 22,000 in-patients and 46,000 out-patients. In the big general hospitals at the larger towns and villages, in 1936 nearly 14,000 Bantu were treated, mostly free, and at the twenty-six hospitals still maintained by missions a total of 9,000 in-patients and 44,000 out-patients were treated. In 1937 these last two figures rose to 21,500 and 46,000 respectively. There are also three leper stations at which some 1,300 patients are treated annually. Courses for Bantu in Red Cross work have also been started, and the pupils have made good progress. Manuals have been translated into the three chief languages. In general, the ideas of the average Bantu man about health and medicine have changed completely in recent years, especially in regard to hospitals. At one time the Bantu would seldom enter one willingly. They have now

overcome this feeling and the hospitals are usually crowded. A number of Bantu are trained each year as orderlies and dispensers and take an examination.

Although the Bantu in their natural state developed a partial resistance to most of the diseases by which they might be infected then, they are always liable to suffer when their living conditions are changed, and they are, too, always liable to take European infections. The effect on the European population cannot be good. In a recent report (for the year 1936) the Medical Director said: 'For a great number of the diseases which worry us, the native provides the infected reservoir, and until we treat these diseases at their source the European community will continually be exposed to constant re-infection with the inevitable sequel of constant ill-health and persistent lack of fitness. The European has no immunity to the native's diseases, and can and does very readily contract any infection to which contact with the native exposes him. It is the results of this contact which I am endeavouring to urge upon the public consciousness and which I desire to take steps to prevent, both by the treatment of the diseases at their source in the native, by raising and bettering his conditions of life, and by urging the European community to assist as far as they can by providing better care and better treatment for the native in food, housing, sanitation, and even in wages, whenever he makes contact with European life. If I can succeed in awakening the public conscience in this regard, I shall feel that I have performed a greater service to the European community than to the native people, however bountiful and productive it may be to the latter in material comforts and in the general betterment of their conditions of life.'

Education is still carried on mainly by missionary

societies, largely supported by voluntary subscriptions from Great Britain and the U.S.A. From 1899 onwards the Government gave small grants in aid of mission schools, which have increased steadily. In 1936 the amount was £53,000. About one-third of the Bantu children in Southern Rhodesia now receive some education—perhaps only a few months, but as much as working-class children were getting in England a century ago. In 1910 the Government first appointed instructors in carpentry and agriculture. During the European War (1914–18) the general demand for greater production drew attention to the possibilities of Bantu labour, of which the general opinion until then had been extremely low. Owing largely to the efforts of Mr. H. S. Keigwin, two Government Schools were set up in 1920–1, in Matabeleland at Tjolotjo and in Mashonaland at Domboshawa, to give a certain amount of elementary education and to train agricultural demonstrators. After a Commission on Native Education had been held in 1925, a separate Department of Native Education was formed in 1928 to take over all forms of native development. It has since been re-absorbed into the Native Affairs Department, to which its agricultural organizers are directly attached. There is a European Director of Native Education with a staff of six European inspectors and two organizing instructors.

In the whole country there were in 1936 thirteen schools for training teachers (a two-year course after Standard VI), forty-seven boarding schools, forty-eight day schools for older children, thirty-four evening schools for men and boys employed in towns, and 1,233 kraal schools, in which 90 per cent. of the total number of pupils (105,500 in all) were being educated. This figure, 105,500, is about 45 per cent. of the total number of children of school age in the country. The average

attendance is a good deal lower than the enrolment. The pupils are of all ages, including adults sometimes. As yet education is not compulsory, though a start may be made soon in the Salisbury location. There are 263 European teachers, mostly missionaries, and 1,762 Bantu. The majority of parents are anxious to send their children to school to learn English, but they cannot afford to do so for long, as the children are needed to work at home, and in many large areas there are no schools for several days' journey. Nearly 90 per cent. of the children at school are therefore below Standard I—that is to say, they probably do not stay at school more than a year or two and only learn to read and write a little. About one child in sixteen of those at school in any given year passes Standard I, and one in a thousand passes Standard VII—not because of inability to do the work, but because of lack of money. The Dutch Reformed Church Mission conducts a school for the blind at Chibi. All schools give at least an hour a day to instruction in agriculture and crafts; boarding schools give two hours. A policy is being followed of training the children, both boys and girls, in things which can be used in their own life at home rather than for earning wages in towns—for instance, showing girls how to cook better under ordinary kraal conditions.

At present there is no secondary education for Bantu. Those who want it, and can pay, go to school in the Union. The main object of the higher stages of the educational system is to produce teachers for kraal schools, but many of those who promise well go off to be policemen, dip supervisors, or messengers in Government or private service, either before or after completing their training as teachers in one of the training schools.

Domboshawa and Tjolutjo in 1936 had 272 and 198 pupils respectively, and could have several times as many

if they could accept all applicants. A fee of £3 a year is charged, rising to £4 10s. in Standard V and upwards. The pupils vary in age, but the average is coming down, since more children now go to school at the usual age, though even the youngest children are above the age of European children in similar standards. Domboshawa conducts a special course for chiefs.

The work done at these two schools is partly advanced school work, but it includes a three-year course of training in agriculture, crop rotation, vegetable gardening, forestry, orchard work, cattle-rearing, sheep-rearing, carpentry, metalwork, and other crafts which can be used to raise the standard of civilization in Native Areas. Tjolotjo specializes in leather work.

Some people would like Government to start a large number of elementary schools and become responsible for the whole of native education. The cost, however, would be heavy, and some experts hold that it may in any case be best that education should remain in the hands of religious workers. In some kraals there are Jeanes teachers and 'home demonstrators' who live amongst the people and aim at improving their housing and general economic life, either by direct teaching or by setting an example which others can follow of how to build good houses, furnish them, cultivate gardens, &c. In some kraals a taste for flower gardens is beginning to appear.

Some of the larger schools have uniforms and hold school displays and sports days, in which pupils from several neighbouring schools of different denominations take part. Inter-school football matches are often held, and an attitude resembling the European attitude towards games is growing up. Both in schools and locations there are companies of Pathfinders and Wayfarers, the equivalents of European Boy Scouts and Girl Guides.



Since 1925 the Government expenditure on native education and development has increased. It has never been more than about 15 or 20 per cent. of the expenditure on European education. In the year 1929, which was fairly typical, some figures for the Union and Southern Rhodesia were as follows:

	<i>Union of South Africa</i>			<i>Southern Rhodesia</i>		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Total receipts from native tax . . .	993,600	0	0	343,688	0	0
Spent by Government on native education . .	570,581	0	0	69,864	0	0
Tax per head of native population . . .		3	9		7	3
Spent on native education per head . . .		2	2		1	6

The Union Government's revenue from other sources was, however, very much greater both positively and in relation to its native tax than that of the Government of Southern Rhodesia.

It is interesting to note that the number of Post Office Savings Bank accounts held by Bantu has increased considerably. It is now over 6,500, evidently one result of improved education. Some of them have expressed a desire for more post offices in Reserves.

The Bantu are on the whole law-abiding people, and if violent crime occurs it is usually the result of drink. In 1936, 315 were convicted of serious crimes (mostly against other Bantu), and nearly 54,000 of minor offences, such as neglect of the pass laws or traffic regulations. In 1937, 325 were convicted of serious crimes and 51,624 of minor offences. These minor offences frequently lead to imprisonment, as the convicted man may not be able

to pay a fine. Europeans sometimes maintain that natives go to prison because they are better off there than outside. There are in all countries a number of people for whom imprisonment has no terrors and who spend as much time inside as out, but it hardly seems reasonable to infer that many Bantu belong to this class. Imprisonment interferes with their chances of earning and spending, two motives which attract them enough to make them do a large amount of work away from home. It is quite possible that imprisonment is more wearisome to a human being straight from wild life than to a civilized man who is more accustomed to being surrounded by walls and working for long hours inside them. Admittedly there is little social discredit in imprisonment, partly because they seldom see much point in the laws they have broken—at any rate so far as minor offences are concerned—and partly because there is never much disgrace amongst the extremely poor and uneducated in being imprisoned.

The Government wishes to reduce the number of sentences of imprisonment, because it is not a good thing for men guilty of slight offences to become accustomed to prison and perhaps be made worse by mixing with hardened criminals. The two classes are separated in prison, the light sentence men being allowed to go out and work in gangs under escorts, the more serious offenders being kept inside the prison. These serious offenders, who are doing long sentences, are taught carpentry, which pays for their keep and probably has a beneficial effect on their minds and may help them to earn a living when they leave prison, if they wish to do so. Tax defaulters charged in their own districts are employed in the Reserves on public works to work off the value of their tax at the rate of 6s. 8d. a month. Natives from other territories, or living in towns, are liable to imprisonment,

but are given an opportunity of borrowing from their friends after sentence, and this seems to be reducing the number of cases of imprisonment.

This section may be ended by a quotation from the Chief Native Commissioner's Report for the year 1936:

'So far as social development is concerned it may be as well to realize that no definite outline can yet be given of the pattern of organization which will be best suited to our natives. It may possibly be a blend of the vestiges of the tribal system with European elements adapted to meet the circumstances consequent on our occupation. It will certainly have to show a realization of the changes which have followed, with a rapidity bewildering to the natives generally, on the introduction of our money economy with its demands for saleable products and wage labour; on education and sophistication; on evangelization; and not on revolutionary transport changes. It will be wise, therefore, to observe, to guide, and to afford opportunity, rather than to impose the unacceptable.'

### CHAPTER XIII

## THE PROTECTORATES AND SOUTH-WEST AFRICA

**B**ORDERING on the Union and, in one case, completely surrounded by Union territory, lie three British territories known as Protectorates. Also bordering on the Union and conquered by the South African forces during the Great War lies South-West Africa, the former German colony, now administered by the Union Government under mandate from the League of Nations. These four territories are predominantly Bantu, and their economic dependence on the Union is such that a description of the Bantu of southern Africa must include one of the territories and of their relation to the Union.

#### (a) *Basutoland*

In the early years of the nineteenth century, Moselikatze, the famous Matabele chief, raided and plundered far and wide and, in the course of his wars, broke up and dispersed many Bantu tribes. But about 1820 a number of these remnants of former tribes were united by a Bantu chief of outstanding ability, Moshesh, who established his new nation in what is to-day called Basutoland. For more than fifty years he ruled the growing Basuto nation wisely, and many stories are told of his abilities as a leader, of his clever diplomacy, and of his deep insight into human nature. He steered his country safely through the very difficult years when European civilization was pushing northwards, and he must be ranked among the great statesmen of South Africa.

Between 1852 and 1868 there was fairly constant trouble and war between Basutoland and the two European states, the Cape Colony and the Free State Republic. These disputes and wars were about boundaries—that is, about the ownership of land; and the absence of accurate maps, combined with the constant land hunger of both sides, made it difficult to come to an arrangement that would suit every one. Further, on the border between Basutoland and the Free State there was constant traffic and frequent cattle raids. In 1865 the last Basuto-Free State war began and when, three years later, Moshesh was on the point of defeat at the hands of the Free State burghers, he appealed to Great Britain for protection. On March 12th, 1868, Moshesh and his Basutos were proclaimed British subjects and this day, known as Moshoeshe's Day, is now celebrated as a public holiday by the Basutos.

The British Government had not been very anxious to accept responsibility for Basutoland, and as soon as it could it persuaded the Cape Government to take it over. This was in 1871, and about ten years later there was a rebellion in Basutoland because the Cape Government tried to disarm the tribesmen. After that, in 1884, the British Government once more took charge and the country has been administered as a Crown Colony by Great Britain ever since then.

Basutoland is a country of 11,716 square miles—about as big as Belgium—and its present population is about 500,000. A large portion of the country is mountainous and not suitable for cultivation, but towards the west the hills and plains are very fertile and have an average rainfall of 30 inches a year. Maseru, the capital, is connected by railway with Bloemfontein, but only about one mile of the railway is in Basutoland itself, and that is controlled

by the Union Government. For the rest, the country has no railways and very few good roads.

The British High Commissioner for South Africa is Governor of Basutoland and has powers to legislate by proclamation. At Maseru the Resident Commissioner represents the Governor, and for practical purposes is the Governor. The country is divided into seven districts, at the head of each of which is an Assistant Commissioner. Each district is divided into wards and over each of these there is one of the so-called 'Sons of Moshesh'—that is, chiefs of the Moshesh family. The Paramount Chief and all the sub-chiefs have very great powers under the British Government, which has never liked to interfere more than it can help in the affairs of Basutoland, and the Basutos themselves, especially the chiefs, resent interference. It must be remembered that the Basutos are not a conquered nation. The chiefs can demand free labour from their subjects, they and the village headmen control the allocation of grazing land and land for cultivation, and they try most civil and many petty criminal cases, though the inhabitants have the right of appeal to the court of the Assistant Commissioner. The chiefs also have great power in the Basutoland Council. This consists of a hundred members, of whom ninety-five are chiefs or nominees of chiefs and five are nominated by the Administration. The Council meets once a year and is consultative only. Although the administration is not bound to follow the advice of the Council, it will seldom pass measures to which the Council is opposed. This often means that necessary reforms in administration or in agriculture are held up by objections from the chiefs, who are conservative and afraid of losing their power. The powers of the chiefs act as a brake on progress, and the younger commoners, especially the more educated

among them, are naturally dissatisfied with this state of affairs.

The type of settlement in Basutoland is the agricultural village with huts close together and the fields within easy reach of the village. The land is not enclosed and each man has a few strips which he and his family cultivate, but which belong to the tribe. He owns his own cattle and sheep and the produce of the land is his own private property. Grazing land is common. The village headman has to keep order, settle minor disputes, assist in the allocation of land and in gathering taxes. Europeans may not own land in Basutoland, and altogether there are about 2,000 European officials, traders, and missionaries.

Law is administered by the Resident Commissioner's Court, assisted by a Judicial Commissioner appointed from the Union. The courts of the Assistant Commissioners and the chiefs' courts administer justice in the districts. Unless altered by proclamation, Basuto tribal law is applied in both civil and criminal cases; mostly it is Basuto civil law and, for serious crimes, European criminal law. A number of Basuto laws have been codified in what are known as 'the Laws of Lerothodi'. Lerothodi was a former Paramount Chief and these laws deal mostly with the powers and rights of the chiefs and the duties of their subjects. Where a European is concerned, the chief has no jurisdiction unless the European has consented to be tried by him.

The annual revenue of the country is about £300,000, of which the Hut Tax is just under half. The Hut Tax is £1 5s. per year for every hut. This really means for every wife occupying a separate hut. No one, however, pays more than £3 15s. In addition to this, there is an education tax of 3s. which is collected with the Hut Tax, but is credited to a separate Development Fund. Chiefs

and headmen must assist in tax collection, and for this and other work they receive a small annual allowance. Taxes of men working on the mines are collected there by an official of the Basutoland Government. The annual expenditure roughly balances the revenue, and the three biggest items are for education, agriculture, and police. About £47,000 is spent each year on Bantu education.

Basutoland exports agricultural produce and wool, and imports manufactured articles of all sorts, blankets, household utensils, groceries, and clothing. The value of the imports is always greater than that of the exports and the difference is paid for, as with all Bantu areas, by the wages of men and women who go to work outside of Basutoland. About 30,000 men go to the mines every year and about half that number to European farms and to work in towns in the Union. There is thus a high percentage of adult males who are away from home at any one time. All imports into Basutoland come in through the harbours of the Union, and a percentage of the Customs duties paid there is handed over to the Basutoland Government.

There are three important mission societies operating in Basutoland. The oldest is the Paris Evangelical Mission, at Morija, which was established more than a century ago and has done wonderful work for the education of Basutoland and, through the Morija Press, for the rest of Southern Africa. The Roman Catholic and the English Church missions were established much later. Education is largely in the hands of the mission societies. There are about 550 elementary schools, which are all Government-aided mission schools, forty-three intermediate schools, of which three are Government and the rest Government-aided, and ten Government-aided institutions for the training of teachers and for industrial



and agricultural instruction. The Government has one technical school, the Lerothodi Technical School at Maseru. Finally, there are a small number of mission schools that do not receive Government aid. Altogether there are about 67,000 pupils at the various schools. In addition to their educational work, the missions organize sports clubs and Wayfarer and Pathfinder detachments and do a great deal for the general welfare of the Basutos.

There are six Government hospitals at which out-patients pay a small fee for medical attention, while in-patients do not pay. The hospitals are staffed with European doctors and with European and Bantu nurses. In every district there is a Medical Officer of the Administration.

The post and telegraph system of Basutoland is controlled by the Union; so, too, are the currency and the Customs duties. A South African bank operates at Maseru.

In many ways Basutoland is different from the other Protectorates. It has a compact territory and a unified population; it has a good climate for agriculture and stock-farming; the people are proud and independent; Europeans may not own land there. On the other hand, overstocking and soil erosion are rife and good country is being wasted; the absence of fencing, to which the chiefs object, and the autocratic powers of the chiefs prevent progressive farmers from getting the best results; the large number of adult males that leave the country to earn cash wages leaves the women and children to cultivate the fields and look after the cattle; young and educated Basutos have no real scope in the administration, because the chiefs are uneducated and conservative.

Village life in Basutoland is much the same as in the Reserves and there is no need to give another description

here. The influence of European civilization is perhaps more marked here than in the other two Protectorates. Bantu dress and domestic industries are disappearing and their place taken by manufactured articles from the traders' stores. But Bantu customs and institutions are still alive and magic still plays an important part in the lives of the people. The family and the village are the foundations of Bantu society and these have not been disturbed as much as in the Union of South Africa.

(b) *Bechuanaland*

Since 1896 the Bechuanaland Protectorate has been administered by Great Britain through the High Commissioner. For some years before that time Cecil Rhodes and his friends, on the one hand, and the Transvaal Republic, on the other, had cast longing eyes on the country over which the famous chief Khama and other chiefs ruled. To Rhodes it was 'the neck of the bottle' in his schemes for British expansion to the north. In 1885, the Bechuana chiefs, under pressure from British subjects and in fear of the Transvaal, applied to Great Britain for protection. This was granted and, ten years later, Rhodes tried to get the territory transferred to the British South Africa Company. He failed in this because the Jameson Raid had turned British public opinion against the Company, but he got a concession to build a railway to connect the Cape with Rhodesia.

The area of the Bechuanaland Protectorate is about twenty-four times that of Basutoland and its population is about 160,000. Large parts of this enormous country are desert or semi-desert, and in the grasslands the climate is more suited to stock-farming than to agriculture. The railway line from the Cape Province runs practically due

north through the territory and the main motor road runs parallel to that. Apart from this, roads are bad, though better inter-town roads are now being constructed to take motor-lorry traffic. A number of European farmers live in one corner of the Protectorate and there is mining in the Tati District; but the total European population is only about 2,000 and the most of the country is divided into Reserves for the different tribes.

The Government is, with certain differences, much like that of Basutoland. The head-quarters of the Administration are in Mafeking, in the Cape Province. There is a Resident Commissioner for the territory and magistrates in charge of each of the eleven districts into which the country is divided for administrative purposes. The chiefs have great powers in the tribal Reserves. They allocate land for ploughing and grazing; they have the right to impose taxes for tribal purposes; they try cases according to tribal law; they are responsible for law and order and must assist in collecting the taxes. It should be remembered that, under British protection, the powers of the chiefs in all the Protectorates have greatly increased. In the pre-European days the chiefs were effectively controlled by their councils and by the public opinion of the tribe. European government tended to support the chief at the expense of the council and these checks on arbitrary power have largely disappeared. Of recent years, however, the Bechuanaland Government's policy has been to re-establish the old councils and to make the chiefs more responsible to their tribes.

There is a Native Advisory Council consisting of the chiefs and five representatives from each of the big tribes. This body meets the Resident Commissioner twice a year to discuss matters of interest to the Bantu inhabitants and to decide on the allocation of money for Bantu welfare.

There is also a European Advisory Council consisting of twelve elected members. This meets twice a year and discusses only such matters as affect European interests. Neither of these bodies has any but advisory powers.

The annual revenue of the Protectorate is about £130,000, of which direct Bantu taxation brings in about 20 per cent. The direct tax on the Bantu population is £1 8s. for every adult male. If a man has more than one wife, he pays additional taxation, but the maximum is £3. Owing to the economic depression and to droughts, the tax has temporarily been reduced to £1. Of the total collected from this source 25 per cent. is paid into a special fund called the Bechuanaland Protectorate Native Fund, to be used for education and agricultural improvement. If a chief is appointed as tax-collector, he receives a percentage of the tax for his work. The biggest items of expenditure are for police, veterinary services, and administration.

The Protectorate exports cattle, hides and skins, wool, dairy products, and curios, and it imports manufactured articles. The imports are greater than the exports and the difference is accounted for by the large numbers who go into the Union to work on the mines and on farms. Customs duties are controlled at the Union ports and a percentage paid over to the Protectorate Government. The postal system is controlled by the Union Government, and the telegraph and telephone system by the Government of Southern Rhodesia, except for one small section, which falls under the Union. The currency of the Union is used in the Protectorates.

The London Missionary Society was established about a hundred years ago and is the oldest mission society in the Protectorate. Among the most important other societies are the Dutch Reformed Church Mission and the

Lutheran Mission. There are about 110 schools for the Bantu, with about 14,000 pupils, and over £14,000 is paid yearly for the upkeep of buildings and in salary grants. This represents about 4 per cent. of the total expenditure of the territory. The Bamangwato tribe have a very fine school, called the Khama Memorial School, which they built themselves and largely support. The education system is much the same as elsewhere, though there are peculiar difficulties in Bechuanaland, owing to the fact that the parents send the children to distant cattle posts, or move with their families to the lands, during the school year. It is difficult to make progress with such irregular attendance.

There are three Government hospitals and five mission hospitals which receive Government aid. The health of the Bantu inhabitants is not good, and this is probably due to malaria and to wrong diet, especially among children. Game, which used to provide a regular meat diet, has decreased steadily, and the lack of water makes vegetable-growing a difficult matter. The distance of the cattle posts from the *stad* often means that there is no milk for the children during eight months of the year. The Bechuana live in large *stads*, sometimes with populations of from 10,000 to 20,000, and the absence of proper sanitary arrangements has a bad effect on the health of the inhabitants.

The tribesmen of Bechuanaland are essentially peasants depending for their food on cattle and grain. For them the climate is very important and the recurrent droughts often reduce them to hunger. There are many boreholes to tap the underground water, but these are not nearly enough to take the place of rain. To pay their taxes and to buy European goods, they depend on being able to sell some of their produce or their labour. Their farming

is primitive and their cattle are scrub cattle, and the Union Government, in order to protect the interests of its own farmers, has limited the import of cattle under a certain weight.

Tribal organization is still strong and tribal customs have survived in most parts of the territory, particularly away from the railway strip. The custom of forming regiments of young men of the same age still exists, but, instead of fighting, they do necessary tribal work, such as constructing a road or building a dam. Many of the young men resent this imposed work which the chiefs have power to demand. European civilization has greatly modified Bantu customs in family and in tribal life. Native industries are dead or dying. But many of the primitive religious and social ceremonies still survive and frequently they exist alongside of Christianity.

### (c) *Swaziland*

Swaziland was taken under the protection of the South African Republic in 1894, but after the Anglo-Boer War it passed to British control and in 1907 was placed under the British High Commissioner for South Africa.

Swaziland is half the size of Basutoland and has a population of 130,000, of whom about 2,500 are Europeans. In the high and middle veld the climate is good for agriculture and stock-farming and is very well watered. In the low veld the climate is very hot and malaria is prevalent. There are no railways in the territory, but the Union Government runs a road-motor service along the main routes.

The head-quarters of the administration are at Mbabane and the administration is much the same as in Bechuanaland. There are a Resident Commissioner, three Assistant

Commissioners, and several Deputy Assistant Commissioners. There is a European Advisory Council of nine members, elected by the Europeans, but there is no Native Advisory Council. Europeans are allowed to own land under certain conditions. As in the other Protectorates, the court of the Resident Commissioner is the supreme court for the country and the Assistant Commissioners preside over the lower courts. The Paramount Chief and other tribal chiefs administer tribal law in cases where Bantu only are concerned. The chiefs have similar powers to those exercised in the other two Protectorates.

The annual revenue is about £150,000, of which about 30 per cent. comes from a tax of £1 15s. on each Bantu male adult who is unmarried or has one wife. Men with more than one wife pay £1 10s. in respect of each wife, but not more than £4 10s. altogether. About 6 per cent. of this tax is placed in the Swazi National Fund to be used for the welfare of the Swazis. There is very little export from Swaziland. A small amount of tin, timber, and cattle is exported and the usual manufactured articles are imported. The Swazis themselves have little to sell except their labour, and there are usually about 9,000 of them on the Witwatersrand mines, beside those who work for Europeans in Swaziland. Customs duties, posts and telegraphs service, and currency are controlled by the Union Government and two South African banks have branches in Swaziland.

There are twenty-three mission societies in Swaziland and Bantu education is in their hands, while the Government gives financial aid and exercises a certain amount of control. There are about 8,000 pupils in mission schools, and every year some of the more advanced are sent to Union institutions, such as Tiger Kloof and

Lovedale, for further training. Their expenses are paid from the Swazi National Fund. There are three Government and three mission doctors.

What was said of Basutoland and Bechuanaland about the power of the chiefs, tribal institutions, village life, and the influence of European civilization is true of Swaziland and need not be repeated here.

*(d) The Protectorates and the Union*

When the union of the four South African colonies was established, it was obvious to the British and South African statesmen of the time that it might be desirable at some time in the future to hand over the three Protectorates to the Union Administration. In a Schedule to the South Africa Act of 1909, therefore, provision was made for this. According to the Schedule, the Governor-General-in-Council shall, after transfer of any territory to the Union, have powers to make laws for that territory by proclamation, subject to the approval of the Union Parliament. The territories will come under the Prime Minister's department and a Commission of at least three people must be appointed to advise the Government. Separate revenue and expenditure accounts must be kept for each territory, and money raised there must be spent there, except that a small amount may be used for general defence purposes. Land in Basutoland, and Reserves in Bechuanaland and Swaziland, may not be alienated. The King may disallow any law made by the Governor-General-in-Council within one year of its proclamation. Finally, any bill to amend the Schedule of the South Africa Act must be approved by the King. It will be seen from these provisions that the British Government wanted to make sure that, if the Protectorates



were transferred, it would still have a control over legislation.

Since 1909 important constitutional changes have taken place, and South Africa is now an equal partner with Great Britain in the British Commonwealth of Nations. In practice this means that, where in 1909 the King in Council meant the King and his British Ministers, to-day it means the King and his South African Government. Once the Protectorates were transferred to the Union, therefore, the British Government would have no more control over them and any safeguards that were inserted in the Act of Union could be amended by the South African Parliament. This new position has caused the British Government to hesitate before handing over the Protectorates.

Although South African statesmen are now asking that the transfer should take place soon, many people in Great Britain and in South Africa are opposed to this on the grounds that Great Britain is the trustee of the Bantu tribes in the Protectorates and cannot hand them over to another government without their consent and without being sure they will benefit from the change. They point out, further, that the tribes, if they are governed by the Union, will become subject to pass laws and to colour bar legislation. Those in favour of the transfer maintain, on the other hand, that the Bantu will benefit economically by passing under Union control because, in any case, the economic life of the Protectorates is completely dependent on the Union. The South African Government controls their customs policy, their currency, and, with a few exceptions, their transport and communications. The Union is a market for their labour and for a good deal of their produce. From the South African point of view, it is maintained that the Union cannot evolve a

comprehensive policy with regard to the Bantu unless the Protectorates are under her direct control. Also, the Protectorates now enjoy privileges from association with the Union without bearing any of the responsibilities. The Bantu tribes themselves are, with small exceptions, said to be opposed to Union control, because they fear that their land may be taken from them and that they will be subject to restrictive legislation. It would not be an easy matter, however, to find out what the Bantu inhabitants of the Protectorates want, because there are no constitutional means of determining public opinion in the Protectorates. Before anything final is done, a number of matters will have to be carefully considered. It will have to be discovered what the economic results will be, not only for the Protectorates, but for the Union. At the moment the Protectorates do not pay their own way and the British Government has to make up the deficits. It will also have to be more clearly known what the policy is which the Union Government intends applying to the Protectorates once it takes them over.

The matter is far from settled and, though it is very probable that in the end the Protectorates will be administered by the Union Government, it is very unlikely that the transfer will take place in a hurry.

#### *(e) South-West Africa*

In 1884, during the scramble for Africa, Germany proclaimed a protectorate over South-West Africa, having made treaties with the Herero chiefs and with the Nama Hottentots. The Hereros and the Nama were hereditary enemies and had fought each other almost continuously until Germany took the country over and placed its capital, Windhoek, between the two tribes. Missionaries

had been in the country since 1844, and later there had been a few traders; but with the German occupation colonization began in earnest. More mission stations were established, traders and Government officials came, and colonist farmers began to settle. In 1904 a rebellion broke out in which the principal Bantu tribes tried to overthrow the German Government. The Hereros were particularly active in the rebellion and it was not finally crushed until 1907. The Herero tribal organization was practically destroyed and they became, instead of cattle-owners, agricultural labourers for the Europeans. Other tribes, both Bantu and Hottentot, were conquered, but they were left very much to themselves, since the German colonists did not require their labour or their land. The Government built two good main roads and 1,400 miles of railway and established harbours at Luderitz and Swakopmund.

At the outbreak of the Great War the South African forces invaded South-West Africa and by 1915 had conquered it. At the conclusion of the War, the country was entrusted to the Union under what is known as a C. Mandate—that is, the Union Government is responsible to the League of Nations for its administration of South-West Africa and must render an annual account to the League. Provided that this responsibility is acknowledged and observed, a C. Mandate territory may be administered as an integral part of the Mandatory Power. The Union Government may, therefore, apply any Union laws to South-West Africa.

When the War was over, the Union Government appointed an Administrator to rule the country, and he had the advice of an Advisory Council of six, nominated by himself; one of these had to be some one specially qualified to give advice about the non-European population. This system remained in force until 1926, when a

new constitution was made. Under this there is a Legislative Assembly of eighteen, of whom twelve are elected by the Europeans and six are appointed by the Administrator; the Executive Committee consists of the Administrator and four members elected by the Assembly. The Assembly may make ordinances on all matters except those specially reserved—such as native affairs, mines, and minerals, customs, railways, police, and military affairs. On these matters the Administrator legislates by proclamation. He is assisted by an Advisory Council consisting of the Executive Committee of the Assembly and three people appointed by him, one of whom must have special knowledge of non-European affairs. All ordinances and proclamations are subject to the approval of the Governor-General of the Union.

The Administrator is the Supreme Chief of all the Bantu tribes and the Government Secretary is the Chief Native Commissioner. Except at Windhoek, the magistrates are Native Commissioners, and under them are Superintendents of Native Reserves and Locations.

For the first few years after this constitution came into force things went smoothly; but first the depression of 1929 and then the political events in Germany began to cause ill-feeling and, later, open hostility between the older German inhabitants and the new colonists from the Union. In 1936 the Union Government had to take drastic steps against the Nazi Party and this, naturally enough, did not lessen the tension. The German Government is anxious to have its former colonies back, but no Union Government will lightly agree to this.

South-West Africa is a country of 317,725 square miles, or about two-thirds the area of the Union, and has a population of 32,000 Europeans and 230,000 non-Europeans. It stretches for 800 miles from the Orange

River to the borders of Angola and from the Atlantic Ocean for 350 miles to the east. A good deal of this area is uninhabited desert. The European population is mostly confined to the central portion of the territory and even there farming is difficult without underground water supplies.

The country is divided administratively into two zones—the police zone and the area outside of it, which lies in the northern part of the territory and includes Ovamboland, the Okavango and the Caprivi Zipfel. In Ovamboland and the Okavango more than half the non-European population lives, although they occupy only  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the area of South-West Africa.

The non-European population consists of various Hottentot tribes, some Bushmen, a few Bastard tribes, and Bantu tribes. Most of the Bantu live outside of the Police Zone and consist of two main groups, the Ovambo and, to the east of Ovamboland, the Okavangos. The system of tribal Reserves is in force in South-West Africa and, particularly outside of the Police Zone, the inhabitants are left very much to themselves. During the German occupation there were no officials in Ovamboland.

There are 107,000 Ovambos, divided into six tribes, and the whole area is to-day in charge of a Native Commissioner, two European assistants, and fourteen Bantu assistants. Three of the tribes are governed by chiefs and the remaining three by councils of headmen. Bantu laws and custom are everywhere in force and the Government exercises a minimum of control—just sufficient to prevent inter-tribal war and crimes of violence.

The Ovambos live in villages surrounded by fences of wooden palings or of brushwood. They are polygamous and a man's status depends on his number of wives. The women cultivate the fields and the men build the huts,

care for the stock, and make the necessary household and agricultural implements. They possess the art of smelting iron and copper and make excellent knives and other implements. They build grain store baskets on wooden poles, and this gives them a primitive grain elevator safe from white ants and weevils. They dig water-holes and cut out a kind of spiral staircase to enable them to reach the bottom. They are good at making baskets and at pottery. It must be remembered that they have not been so much influenced by European civilization as the Bantu in the Union or in Southern Rhodesia. Apart from the few missionaries and officials, there are no Europeans in Ovamboland and the Ovambos are separated by semi-desert country from the central portion of the territory, where the Europeans live. That is why they still retain many of the arts and customs which are dead or dying in the Reserves of the Union. But here, too, European civilization is encroaching, and Bantu customs and arts are beginning to show signs of change under its powerful influence.

As is usual in Southern Africa, education is in the hands of the mission societies, and Government pays £200 a year towards the education of the Ovambo. There are a few schools and one flourishing industrial school run by the Finnish Mission. The same institutions, with local differences, that obtain among other Bantu tribes obtain here too. Initiation ceremonies, marriage rites, tribal and family obligations, religious beliefs, witchcraft, and superstition are similar to those elsewhere in Africa. The Christian religion, schools, and medical work, for which, again, the missions are responsible with very little Government aid, are gradually doing their work.

To the east of Ovamboland, on the Okavango River, are about 22,000 Okavango Bantu. Their country is also

a Reserve and, as regards administration, mission societies and education, the conditions are much the same as in Ovamboland. The officials in charge say that the Okavango are much more primitive and backward in their habits and customs than the Ovambo. Living in a tropical climate, they have not had such a struggle for existence and do not show the same abilities and industry.

There is one very important difference between these two groups and the Bantu in Reserves in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. In these two countries and in the Protectorates, we found that the impact of a money economy on a subsistence economy had in course of time brought about a large migration from the Reserves to the towns and farms and mines. There are farming and mining in South-West Africa, but on such a comparatively small scale that the Reserves of Ovamboland and the Okavango have not been seriously drawn upon. It is true that recruiting takes place in these two areas, but there is not the constant flow to and from the mines that is found in South Africa. The Ovambo are isolated from the rest of South-West Africa by semi-desert country, and less than 5 per cent. of them are found in the Police Zone. The tribes further south supply most of the labour for European farms. The result of this is that the Ovambo and the Okavango are not subject to the strains that tribal life in the Union suffers, and European ideas can be introduced more slowly without violently disturbing the foundations of tribal life and institutions. It is true, of course, that such a primitive subsistence economy as the Ovambo and Okavango practise shows very few signs of advancing along what Europeans regard as progressive lines and their social and economic life tends to be static. But the havoc caused by too rapid an introduction of European ideas in the rest of southern Africa would seem

to indicate that the slower pace in Ovamboland and the Okavango will be more durable and less devastating.

In the Police Zone the important tribe is the Herero. We saw that this tribe had lived in constant enmity with the Nama Hottentots until the German Government came to maintain the peace. The rebellion of 1904-7 broke their tribal organization and the German Government forbade them to keep cattle; this effectively prevented them from reorganizing the tribal system, because to them cattle were the spiritual bonds of the tribe. The Union Government promised to give them land and to let them keep cattle. Reserves were accordingly created, but the Hereros were far from satisfied, because they had understood that the conquest of the Germans would result in their getting the whole land back. Instead of this, the European population increased by emigration from the Union, and the Herero are to-day a dissatisfied people.

There are about 24,000 Hereros and about 19,000 live in various Reserves. Government has sunk boreholes for them, constructed dipping-tanks, and established dairies for them; but to-day, although they are a proud people, they are poverty-stricken and sullen and refuse to co-operate in any scheme for the improvement of their condition. They are opposed to having missionaries or mission schools in their Reserves, and the only school is one which the Government has recently opened. Like most Bantu, the Herero tribal and religious customs are intimately connected with cattle, and they refuse to sell their stock to make money. They have all the tribal customs and superstitious beliefs that we find elsewhere among primitive Bantu tribes. Their houses and their family relationships, their religious ceremonies at birth or marriage or death, their dances and music and stories,



and their general mode of life, are much the same as among other tribes, though there are, of course, marked differences in detail.

Probably the chief reason why the Herero are so dissatisfied is that their tribal organization was broken up after the rebellion. Their Paramount Chief died in exile and for many years they were deprived of their customary tribal life. During these years they took to Christianity in great numbers, but when they thought they saw a chance, under the Union Government, of re-establishing the old tribal life, they left the farms on which they were working and flocked to the Reserves. They found, however, that it was not easy to rebuild the tribal system once it had broken down and so they have become discouraged.

Apart from the Bantu tribes in South-West Africa, there are Hottentots, Bushmen, Bastards, and Berg Damara. There are about 20,000 Nama or Hottentots scattered in a few Reserves and as servants to the Europeans. In their Reserves they are well-off for mission stations and schools, but they are poor and backward and have no real tribal unity or pride of race like the Ovambo. One of the Hottentot tribes, the Bondelswarts, rebelled against the Government in 1922 and the rising was suppressed with a good deal of severity. Civilization has deprived them of their customary means of living, since they may no more roam the country hunting or raiding the Herero for cattle. They must now make their living by working for the Europeans or by agriculture and stock-farming in a part of the country where Nature is not kind and where periodic droughts reduce them to hunger and want.

There are about 5,000 Bushmen in South-West Africa, and these people, as elsewhere, are unable to adapt

themselves to European civilization. They have steadily retreated before the Europeans, and the Government is considering establishing a Reserve where they may live as they are accustomed to live, by hunting and from roots and herbs. Very occasionally they become servants of European farmers, but, as a rule, they keep as far away as possible from European civilization. There are very few Bushmen left in Africa and their art and music are famous. European civilization does not seem to be able to influence them in any way.

There are about 9,000 Bastards, or people of mixed European and non-European descent, and they live in a Reserve of their own called the Reheboth Reserve. They have their own Council and a written constitution which was in existence before the German occupation. They are a backward people and, though some of them are well-off, they find it exceedingly difficult to make a living.

Finally, there are the Berg Damaras, with a population of about 24,000. These people are not pure Bantu and they have an interesting history. Before the German occupation they were servants of the Hereros and Nama and were looked down upon by these tribes. In many cases they were practically slaves. To-day they are scattered all over the territory and are the servants of the Europeans in the towns and on the farms. They have no real tribal organization and they only became completely free when the German Government broke the power of the Hereros. Some of them live in the Reserves, but mostly they form the chief labour force of the country. They have responded well to European civilization and have been able to adapt themselves to the new conditions more easily than the other tribes.

There are not many towns in South-West Africa, but

where there are there will be found the same sort of Location for non-Europeans as elsewhere in southern Africa. Windhoek, the capital and largest town, has a population of 4,000 Europeans and 6,000 non-Europeans. Such portions of the Urban Areas Act of South Africa as are relevant apply in South-West Africa too, and municipal councils have limited powers to make regulations for the Locations. There is a pass system in force, but it does not apply in the Reserves. Except in the Reserves, the non-Europeans pay very few taxes. There is a pass fee and they have to pay Wheel Tax and Dog Tax. In the Reserves the taxes are chiefly grazing fees and Dog Taxes, and all the money goes to the Tribal Funds to be spent in the Reserves for the benefit of the inhabitants. A vagrancy law is in force outside of the Reserves. By this a non-European may choose his own master, but, if he cannot find one, the magistrate may do so for him. If he refuses to accept this work, he may be charged under the vagrancy law and given the option of going to work or of going to prison.

As we saw above, the education of the Bantu and of the coloured population is in the hands of the mission societies. The Government pays the salaries of teachers and supplies furniture and equipment. The mission societies must supply the buildings and pay half the cost of the books. There are ten schools for coloured people and about sixty-five for Bantu. There are also three training schools for teachers. The total number of pupils in all schools is about 5,000 and the amount spent by the Government is about £3 per pupil per year. For Europeans it is about £18.

The Government has built three hospitals for non-Europeans, at Windhoek, Keetmanshoop, and Omaruru, and in Windhoek there is a native dispensary. Employees

of the railways and of the mines receive free medical attention. In the Reserves, mission societies sometimes have a doctor on the staff, and the Government pays a subsidy or supplies drugs free of charge.

It should be realized that the conditions in South-West Africa are dependent on the Union Government and that there are prospects of considerable change in the future. A Government Commission investigated affairs there in 1936 and recommended, among other things, that the Native Administration staff should be increased, that more money should be spent on education and on medical facilities for non-Europeans, and that non-Europeans should pay slightly more taxation. The Commission also recommended certain constitutional changes, but even if these are adopted the administration of non-Europeans will still remain the responsibility of the Union Government, working through the Administrator.

## CONCLUSION

**I**T might be fitting now to point some kind of moral, and to sketch, however briefly, the policy to which we think what we have written points. However, we have been doing our best to write objectively and express only views which are generally accepted, and we do not intend to go further here. The relations of the races in Southern Africa are a subject on which most Europeans in the Union and Rhodesia inevitably form opinions of their own, and we only hope some of them may find this book helpful in doing so.

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